

Agreement signed for recycling project in Amman Municipality

AMMAN (Petra) — An agreement was signed Sunday evening between three non-governmental organisations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to recycle waste products within the Greater Amman area.

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi, who attended the signing ceremony, said the project aims at combating pollution. He thanked the parties involved in the project — the Jordan Environmental Society (JES), the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), the Arab Women's Society (AWS) and the UNDP — for their interest in protecting the environment.

Jorge Lissner, UNDP resident representative in Jordan, stated that recycling is one of the ways to help protect the environment, which he said is threatened by waste, desertification and the danger of contaminated water.

Mr. Lissner announced that the UNDP has donated JD30,000 to the recycling project.

JES President Ahmad Obaidat underlined the importance of collecting solid waste materials like paper, aluminium, plastic and glass, to be recycled and called on other Jordanian NGOs to join hands with the consortium of the three local organisations to ensure the success of this project.

According to the recycling project director, Hala Obaidat, the three organisations are aiming to protect natural resources, reduce the amount of waste through collection campaigns in cooperation with the Amman Municipality, reduce the amount of gas emissions, and raise public awareness on protecting the environment.

Municipality begins moving headquarters

Meanwhile, the Greater Amman Municipality has begun transferring its offices from Prince Mohammad Street in downtown Amman to the new city hall located in the Ras Al 'Ain district.

Dr. Abbadi, who made the announcement Monday, said all municipality departments will reopen their doors to the public at the new premises on April 18.

He appealed to the public to refrain from calling at the old municipality complex on Wednesday and Thursday to allow municipality staff to complete the moving process.

The mayor said the new premises have been provided with all necessary facilities, including a parking lot, a nursery, and a cafeteria, for the benefit of municipal employees and the public alike.

Media ban on Naddeh case ordered by judiciary — Ensour

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government on Monday defended tough measures against a local newspaper after it defied a news blackout imposed by the state prosecutor on last week's grizzly killing of three prominent Jordanians.

"Some of the weeklies and dailies were critical of the government's position not to publish anything on the [murder] case" to safeguard the investigation, Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Abdullah Ensour told a regular press briefing.

"It was the judge supervising the investigation that ordered the ban, not the government, and we respect his decision," he added.

"The media has no right to complain or violate the ban," said Dr. Ensour, defending a security sweep on the daily.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Abdullah Ensour, Ministry of Information Undersecretary Ahsan Ramzi (l), and Press and Publications Department chief Bilal Tal address Monday's press conference (Petra photo)

Dr. Ensour's comments came a day after Al Arab Al Yawm wrote several articles describing how the ban was enforced and subsequent security measures were taken against the daily.

The daily said policemen, acting on a tip that the newspaper intended to run a full report on the triple murder, surrounded the offices of the newspaper on Friday, delaying its distribution.

The police only allowed it to hit newsstands after senior officers read the article and authorised its release, the newspaper said, adding that the ban and the measures taken to enforce it were illegal. Other dailies either abided by the ban or ran stories that were carried by the official news agency and state television.

Al Arab Al Yawm said the newspaper had sent letters to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and the ministers of interior and information to protest Friday's "harassment" of newspaper staff.

German equipment to arrive Thursday for military expo

AMMAN (J.T.) — A higher committee representing the organisers of a military equipment exhibition to be held in Amman later this month Monday said 80 foreign firms and 30 local firms applied to take part in the event.

Water ministry announces plans to increase output from Disi aquifer

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The underground waters of the Disi aquifer, in southern Jordan, will soon be pumped out and piped to Amman for domestic use at the rate of 100 million cubic metres (MCM) per year, officials have told the Jordan Times.

"We could say that the realisation of the project is imminent," Qusayy Qutayshat, secretary general at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, said yesterday.

"We are planning to act on a 'Build, Operate, and Transfer' (BOT) basis," he added.

Jordan is currently exploiting around 60 MCM of Disi water yearly for agricultural use.

"We intend to use that water to meet Amman's domestic and municipal demand, as well as increase the flow to the rate of 100 MCM per year,"

Minister of Water and Irrigation Muntzer Haddadin told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

The Disi aquifer is part of an extensive sandstone formation which runs under North Africa, the Fertile Crescent and Saudi Arabia, the minister said.

Iraqi students without residency can continue studies — official

By Mohammad Ben Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government has allowed Iraqi students without residency permits to continue their studies at Jordanian schools, according to an official.

The decision, taken on humanitarian grounds, took effect as of yesterday, added the Ministry of Education official, who requested anonymity.

The ministry allowed some 5,000 Iraqis with no residency permits to attend Jordanian schools earlier this year, provided they worked on obtaining a permit.

The official said studies are under way to determine if the ministry could provide similar exemptions to Iraqi students during the 1998-1999 scholastic year.

Among the countries taking part in the exhibition are the U.S., Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Romania, according to the organisers. The participants will be exhibiting small arms and light artillery, helicopters, night vision equipment, land and navigation systems, field support weapons, and radar and communications systems.

Majali asks transport ministry to restructure country's passenger services

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday said the Ministry of Transport should conduct a comprehensive study on restructuring the transport system to promote passenger services both within Amman and between the capital and other towns in Jordan.

Speaking during a visit to the ministry, Dr. Majali urged it to give due attention to all facets of transport, including land, maritime and air transport, saying that it is the most basic component of the economic sector and plays a leading role in the creation of an appropriate investment climate.

The prime minister said Jordan seeks to develop the most modern transport facilities and modernise land transport fleets.

He said that the Ministry of Transport should also install bus stops with public utilities.

Since the ministry is the prime party concerned with the transport sector in Jordan, it should have the authority to issue licences to operate buses on external routes, rather than other departments, he added.

Dr. Majali also urged the ministry to speed up procedures for Jordanian and Arab merchants who import or export goods via the Aqaba seaport.

In particular, he said, laboratory tests conducted on certain imported goods should be facilitated and a central laboratory should be established to take care of this procedure.

The prime minister stressed the importance of railways in reducing the congestion along various routes linking main towns. He urged the ministry to finalise studies on the construction of railway system.

what's going on

- BALLET**
- * Ballet performance by the students of the Abhiyyah School for Girls at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (There will be another performance on Wednesday, April 15 at 8:00 p.m.)
- FILM**
- * German film "Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter" (with subtitles in English) at Abdul Hameed Shorman Foundation, Jabel Amman at 6:30 p.m.
- LECTURES**
- * "The Arabic Epigraphic Poems of Granada and General Life" by Salah Jassar at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman on Wednesday, April 15 at 6:00 p.m.
 - * International Right to Exploitation of Water (in English) by Dr. Christian Ule at the Applied Science University on Wednesday, April 15 at 10:00 a.m.

New dialogue programme launched to clarify European policies, decisions

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In order to elucidate Europe's policies and the driving forces behind decisions taken by the European Commission and the European Parliament, the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy (JID) and the EuroCom Gesellschaft für europäische Kommunikation in Berlin have launched the Jordan-European Dialogue Programme (JEDI).

JEDI entails a series of quarterly events and falls within the framework of enhancing dialogue and facilitating the exchange of information between Jordan and Europe.

JEDI was initiated Sunday by Frieder Otto Wolf, member of the European Parliament, with a lecture on the institution of the European Union (EU).

In his remarks, Professor Wolf examined how far the EU treaty has developed in practice into a legal framework of a quasi-constitutional character. Additionally, Professor Wolf debated the networking of "agents" within the EU and its effect on the EU's internal and external relations.

Jordan signed the Euro-Jordanian Association Agreement in November 1997. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan at that time emphasised that the dialogue between Europe and the countries of the Mediterranean should transcend economic issues and address democracy, human rights, cultural cooperation and security.

Professor Wolf touched upon the Euro-Mediterranean process in context to the United States and the role this process plays in the region.

"In my opinion, the United States is increasing its cooperation with the EU," he said.

House committee asks for arrested journalist's release

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A Lower House of Parliament committee on Monday urged Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali to release a journalist working for the independent Al Arab Al Yawm Arabic newspaper who was arrested early yesterday.

Deputy Mohammad Azaideh, head of the House's committee on public freedoms and human rights, asked Dr. Majali to free Yousef Gheishan, 41, also an editor and satirical writer at "Abed Rabbah," a weekly tabloid owned by the Riyadh Al Hroub group, which publishes Jordan's oldest weekly, Shihan.

Mr. Gheishan's family said 15 security agents stormed the house of Mr. Gheishan at midnight Sunday.

"They searched the whole house and took everything that had his handwriting on it, his files and archive," his brother, Nabil Gheishan, told the Jordan Times.

Official

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U.S. slams Bangladesh's strife-torn politics

DHAKA (AFP) — The United States Monday slammed Bangladesh's violence-ridden politics and called on national leaders to strengthen its fragile democracy through compromise.

"If there is one message I would like to deliver to the people of Bangladesh and all political parties, it is political differences must be resolved in a give-and-take manner in parliament and not waged on this nation's streets," U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson said in a speech.

"It is clear that democracy in Bangladesh remains fragile and vulnerable to machinations of political partisanship and rivalry," he told the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

"Compromise, not confrontation, accommodation, not acrimony, must be the words we use to describe democracy. That

includes the United States and it includes Bangladesh.

"Democracy can only succeed in an environment of civility and respect," he said, adding the U.S. was committed to helping ensure that democracy, freedom and human rights took root in Bangladesh.

But Mr. Richardson tempered his criticism with praise for Muslim Bangladesh's progress.

"Bangladesh is also a Muslim country and its track record of democracy breaks many of the conventional negative stereotypes about Muslim countries," he said.

Mr. Richardson, who arrived here earlier Monday on a one-day visit, was speaking ahead of a general strike called for Wednesday by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its allies against a landmark peace treaty signed between the government and tribal rebels in south-

eastern hills.

The opposition claims the pact is "unconstitutional."

"It remains my sincere hope ... that politically-motivated strikes will be the exception, not the rule, in Bangladesh politics," Mr. Richardson continued.

"We strongly support the evolution of an independent judiciary, a strong and independent human rights commission and greater autonomy for government-run television and radio stations," he added.

To loud applause, Mr. Richardson announced that U.S. President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary would visit Dhaka during their South Asian tour later this year.

Mr. Clinton will be the first U.S. head of state to visit Bangladesh since it gained independence from Pakistan in 1971.

On U.S. investment here, Mr. Richardson said, "American businesses are taking notice." In 1996

U.S. investment was a meagre \$25 million and "today it's approaching \$200 million and could top \$1 billion by the turn of the century."

Bangladesh could only prosper if it embraced global changes such as open markets and free trade, he added.

Mr. Richardson is expected to press for greater access for leading U.S. oil and gas exploration firms during talks with Bangladeshi leaders.

Mr. Richardson held talks with Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed and BNP chief Khaleda Zia before leaving for India early Wednesday.

He is leading a 15-member delegation which includes U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth and other officials on a trip that will also take in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.



The head of North Korea's delegation Jon Kum-Chol (centre) arrives for talks with South Korean delegates amid a crush of reporters in Beijing (Reuters photo)

S. Korea mulls steps to stimulate inter-Korean cooperation

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's ruling camp discussed steps to promote inter-Korean economic cooperation Monday, but stressed fertilizer aid to the North would depend on its reciprocal measures to improve ties.

The stimulus steps were proposed at a policy coordination session of South Korea's acting Prime Minister Kim Jong-Pil, government officials and ruling party leaders.

Mr. Kim and other officials agreed to abolish the ceiling on start-up South Korean business investment in North Korea, currently set at \$1 million, party officials said.

Other proposals included tax breaks on South Korean plant exports to North Korea and freer business trips, they said.

But Unification Minister Kang In-Duk said fertilizer aid would be linked to the

North's acceptance of reunions of separated families and other pending issues in landmark government-level talks in Beijing.

"Our position is firm that the issue of providing fertilizer will be discussed on the premise that it contributes to improving inter-Korean ties," Mr. Kang said.

In Beijing Monday, the North's chief delegate Jon Kum-Chol hinted that Pyongyang would keep its doors open to the South to seek ways to ease its food shortages.

"I believe those matters will also be discussed later," Mr. Jon said when asked if the North planned to ask for more help other than fertilizers such as agricultural technology and seeds.

The three-day talks had been put off by a few hours as the North Korean delegation apparently

needed more time to receive directions from Pyongyang.

Mr. Jon had earlier denounced the South for linking fertilizer aid to the North's acceptance for contacts and reunions of separated families and exchanging special envoys.

He stressed the North needed fertilizer in bulk in time for its spring season. "Politics must not interfere with this issue," Mr. Jon said.

North Korea reportedly wants 200,000 tonnes of nitrate fertilizers from South Korea to help alleviate chronic famine in the country.

South Korean officials noted that the 150,000 tonnes of free rice the South shipped to the North in 1995 had done little to improve inter-Korean ties, adding Seoul would only supply fertilizer "piecemeal and over time."

Dock dispute and Aboriginal landrights split Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — A waterfront dispute and Aboriginal landrights will damage Australia's international reputation and split the nation, senior church leaders warned Monday, as new polls showed a country already divided.

"Waterfront division and the Wik schism are reminding us of the fragility of our national unity: From coastal port to outback station, our national unity is being torn apart by these disputes," Uniting Church spokeswoman Elizabeth Hastings said.

Melbourne's Anglican Archbishop Keith Rayner said the handling of a national docks crisis in which 2,000 union workers were last week sacked by Patrick Stevedores with government backing, was morally questionable.

"I think it's a very dangerous situation," he told national radio.

"The way the government and the stevedores have acted, whilst possibly technically legal, I must say morally it seems to me it leaves a lot to question."

His comments follow an open letter Sunday in the Melbourne Age signed by five prominent church leaders calling on Prime Minister John Howard to show moral leadership or risk Australia's international

reputation in a race-based election over landrights.

Last week the Upper House Senate rejected for the second time the government's so-called "Wik" bill aimed at amending a High Court ruling on the land rights of indigenous Aborigines.

Under the constitution the government is now empowered to call snap elections following the defeat of its bill.

The church leaders' letter said the parliamentary process had "failed all Australians, undermined reconciliation and brought distress upon the nation."

"We fear that without creative and moral leadership, infused by a sense of urgency, this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity may be squandered."

They warned the rights of indigenous Australians were too important to become the political focus of the next election.

Queensland Premier Rob Borbidge, a strong supporter of the Wik bill, called the letter "an absolute disgrace."

"I would invite those church leaders to put their money where their mouths are. If they believe in co-existence ... then they should open up their church properties to co-

existence with Aborigines right across Australia."

Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer said the church had "massively misinterpreted" the issues and should stay out of politics.

"I contest that some of the archbishops, I think, are massively misinterpreting the 10-point (Wik) plan," he told ABC radio.

"The churches have legitimate interests and are not always accurate commentators on matters political," Polls show the country already at loggerheads on both issues.

One poll to be published in the Bulletin magazine this week shows 44 per cent of respondents do not think the government is doing the right thing for all those involved in the native title debate, including cattle farmers, miners and Aborigines.

That compares with 40 per cent who expressed similar doubts in a survey conducted last December. Just 30 per cent were fully behind the government's stance, compared with 36 per cent in December.

A separate poll, also for the Bulletin magazine, shows 47 per cent of those questioned approve of the mass sackings of Mr. Patrick's union workforce, but 45 per cent disapprove.

Taleban urge U.S. to recognise their government

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — A Taliban diplomat has called on the United States to acknowledge the political realities in Afghanistan, according to an interview published Monday ahead of a high-level U.S. mission's visit.

"It is highly regrettable that the United States has adopted an unrealistic approach towards Taliban who control 80 per cent of the territory including the capital Kabul," said Abdul Hakim Mujahid.

Mr. Mujahid, Taliban ambassador here, told local newsmagazine NNI that the United States should admit the realities and recognise the Islamic Emirate established in Afghanistan.

"We will observe if they have changed their policies," the diplomat said, referring to the coming visit of U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson to Afghanistan for talks with the Taliban and its opponents.

Mr. Richardson, now in Bangladesh at the start of his South Asian tour, is due to make a one-day trip to Afghanistan on April 17. He will be the most senior U.S. official to visit in 20 years.

He is to hold talks with Taliban authorities in Kabul and also meet with leaders of an opposition alliance in northern cities.

The United States has been strongly critical of the human rights record of the Taliban militia, which has imposed its rigid interpretation of Islamic Sharia law in areas it controls.

Dozens of bodies found in mass grave in Afghan province

KABUL (AFP) — A mass grave containing 30 bodies believed to be victims of Afghanistan's ousted Communist regime has been discovered in Kandahar province, the ruling Taliban militia's Radio Shariat said Monday.

The report said the corpses, which all had their hands tied behind their backs, were those of Mujahedeen and religious scholars executed during the Communist era.

The mass grave was found Saturday in a desert near Kotal-i-Murchi, eight kilometres from Kandahar city, the Taliban seat of power in the south-west of the country.

The Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, visited the grave and ordered that a special cemetery be built for the bodies, it added.

Mass graves containing bodies of those believed to have been massacred during the Communist era have also been found in Kabul and Herat provinces.

The Soviet-backed Communists detained and killed thousands of opponents in the early years of their rule which ran from 1978 until the middle of 1992.

U.N. wants news on 500 Indonesians before deciding on asylum-seekers

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The United Nations refugee office said Monday it wanted news of some 500 Indonesians who were detained after deportation from Malaysia before deciding on the fate of 22 asylum-seekers.

Gottfried Koefner, head of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) liaison office here, said "we don't have all the elements to decide" on the 14 Indonesians "holed-up" at its compound.

"We are having a situation where a large number of people were returned but held for questioning. It would be important before taking a final decision to understand what is happening to the 500 people," he told AFP.

It has been two weeks since 14 Indonesians stormed into the UNHCR compound to seek asylum. Another eight scaled walls to make their way into the U.S. embassy Friday.

Mr. Koefner said the UNHCR would "make an effort to get an understanding" on what happened to the 500, as this

may affect its future handling of such cases.

In the meantime, the UNHCR had upon request of the U.S. mission sent officials there to look into their eight cases, he said, but stressed that the final decision was up to the embassy.

The UNHCR also planned to meet with Malaysian foreign ministry officials to "brief them and discuss preliminary findings" on the 14 immigrants and discuss other outstanding issues such as access to immigrants in detention camps, he added.

He noted it was "regrettable" the UNHCR could only interview the asylum-seekers when they crashed into foreign missions.

Both Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur have stood firm and said the immigrants are economic, not political refugees who must be deported amid the regional economic slowdown.

Acehnese immigrants argue they face reprisals back home because of a low-level separatist campaign which has rumbled

on since the 1970s in the province, in north Sumatra to the west of peninsular Malaysia.

But the Indonesian military has denied any reprisals against returning Acehese, even though 500 were held for questioning after being deported over their alleged links to an outlawed Acehese separatist group.

The U.S. embassy and other foreign missions in the capital have gone on alert, tightening security at their compounds after 35 Indonesian immigrants gate-crashed into four missions over the week-end seeking asylum.

Apart from the eight at the U.S. embassy, 20 other Acehese stormed into the French and Swiss embassies while seven entered a Brunei rest house before being swiftly arrested by Malaysian police.

Malaysia, which has deported thousands of illegal immigrants, has been criticised by human rights groups for not discriminating between economic and political migrants.

U.S. firms turned over missile help to China

NEW YORK (R) — A classified defence department report has concluded that scientists from Hughes Electronics Corp. and Loral Space Communications Ltd. turned over expertise to China that significantly improved the reliability of China's nuclear missiles, the New York Times reported Monday.

The scientists from the two companies turned over the information as part of their investigation of a Feb. 16, 1996, crash of a Chinese rocket that Loral had contracted for the launch of a \$200 million satellite, the Times said, citing unnamed officials.

In addition to identifying the cause of the crash — said to be an electrical flaw in the electronic flight-control system — the 200-page accident assessment also discussed other sensitive aspects of the rocket's guidance and control systems, an area of weakness in China's missile programmes, the Times said.

The May 1997 report concluded that "United States national security has been harmed."

The report, whose existence has been secret, prompted a criminal investigation of the companies, the Times reported, citing unnamed officials.

The companies told the Times their employees acted properly but they declined to discuss the matter.

Criminal charges are unlikely to be brought, largely because the investigation was undermined this year when President Bill Clinton approved Loral's export to China of the same information about guidance systems, the Times said.

Mr. Clinton acted despite strong opposition from the justice department, which argued that approval would undercut any criminal case, the Times said.

Loral chairman Bernard Schwartz was the largest personal donor to the democratic party last year, the Times said.

The White House denied any political interference in the issue.

Mexico begins sending out foreigners arrested in Chiapas

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — The first three of a group of 12 foreigners arrested in a military and police raid in southern Mexico over the weekend were put on an aeroplane and expelled from the country, Interior Ministry officials reported.

United States citizens John Michael Sabato, Travis Loller Blaize and Jeffrey Conant Wright were put on an aeroplane with a one-way ticket to Los Angeles late Sunday.

Nine other foreigners — a German, four Spaniards, two Canadians and two Belgians — were being held by authorities at the Mexico City airport awaiting deportation.

The foreigners were arrested along with eight Mexicans and accused of creating a "spurious authority" in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas by founding an "autonomous town" on land that supporters of leftist Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) rebels seized Friday.

The foreigners were expelled for "flagrantly violating the constitution," said Sergio Orozco of the Interior Ministry.

Not only did they participate in political activ-

ities, but they "tried to exercise authority over Mexican citizens that neither they nor the Mexicans had the right to," said Mr. Orozco, adding that chartering new towns was legally only done by legislatures.

When flying out of Chiapas under government escort one of the arrested foreigners shouted: "We haven't been able to see lawyers. We did nothing wrong and we are being deported without even seeing a judge."

One foreigner threw a note out the window complaining that they had not been able to contact their consulates.

The government's hard line became apparent Sunday as police attacked two photographers — one working for Agence France-Presse — as they attempted to photograph the arrested foreigners at an airport here.

"Police were chasing us, shouting, 'get their film,'" said AFP photographer Oriana Elcabe.

Chiapas state public security agents struck a second photographer with rifle butts and tried to confiscate his equipment. The two took refuge in the offices of

AVIACSA, a local airline.

Saturday 800 soldiers and police agents expelled the 600 rebel supporters from land they took over to create the 32nd autonomous town to be founded in the remote area since December 1994.

The EZLN briefly fought the government in January 1994 before reaching a truce.

Tensions in the already volatile state rose following the massacre last Dec. 22 of 45 peasants in the village of Acteal.

Until this weekend, the autonomous towns had been tolerated and touted by Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos as unofficial implementation of a 1996 agreement that gave some autonomy to indigenous Maya living in the state.

But that pact has not yet been officially implemented.

Political sources in Mexico City said that it was easier to justify the raid because most of the foreigners present had entered the country on tourist visas and had become involved in politics illegally.

Botha trial will go ahead, South Africa's truth body says

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Monday dismissed reports that it was trying to sidestep a court showdown with ageing apartheid-era president P.W. Botha.

A report Sunday in the Afrikaans newspaper Rapport said behind-the-scenes efforts were under way to arrange a special

Truth Commission hearing for Mr. Botha if he should change his mind and agree to testify about his role as apartheid's enforcer-in-chief.

But the Star newspaper Monday quoted a TRC spokesman as saying that was "a lot of hot air" and that Mr. Botha would stand trial in George as planned.

"I have carefully considered all the circumstances

and the evidence and I am satisfied that Mr. Botha is fit to stand trial, and accordingly he will attend court Tuesday," Mr. Kahn said.

If convicted of ignoring a subpoena to testify before the commission, the 82-year-old former president faces two years' imprisonment or a 2,000 rand (\$400) fine.

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Mao Zedong
China since
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S. Korea
drags

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Yeltsin dismisses proposed change to constitution

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin Monday dismissed a proposed constitutional amendment to make the head of the Upper House of Parliament acting head of state should the president become incapacitated.

"First of all it's not logical. Second, there will be no modification of the constitution while I'm president," the ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying.

"Finally, there's no reason why we cannot carry on using the (current) arrangements," Mr. Yeltsin told journalists at the Kremlin.

According to the 1993 Basic Law, the prime minister becomes acting head of state should the president prove incapable of carrying out his tasks.

However, parliamentary leaders say that the post of premier is currently vacant because Sergei Kiriyenko, Mr. Yeltsin's 35-year-old candidate for the premiership, has not yet been confirmed in the job by parliament.

Many deputies believe that even if the baby-faced pro-reform technocrat is confirmed in office, his youth and lack of experience mean he would not have the necessary authority to rule Russia as acting president.

The head of the upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, is the experienced Yegor Stroyev, a 61-year-old non-partisan figure regarded as a centrist.

Alexander Shokhin, head of the pro-government Our Home is Russia party, said on NTV television Sunday that his party has proposed the change in constitution with Mr. Yeltsin's approval.

Mr. Yeltsin, who at 67 has already lived almost 10 years longer than average male life expectancy, has suffered a series of health problems which have kept him away from the Kremlin for prolonged periods.

In November 1996 he underwent a quintuple heart bypass after suffering his third heart attack in less than two years on the eve of his reelection as president in July.



Chinese President Jiang Zemin (left) speaks to South African Vice President Thabo Mbeki in Beijing. Mbeki's visit is the highest-level South African government visit to China since Pretoria switched its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing on January 1 this year (Reuters photo)

S. Korean police-students standoff drags on, some stage hunger-strike

SEOUL (AFP) — Hundreds of radical South Korean students staged sit-ins on two campuses in the southern city of Taeju Monday as a standoff with police dragged into its fourth day, reports and student sources said.

The thousands of riot police, who heavily outnumber the students, have since Friday threatened to storm the campuses if the radicals try to hold elections for officers of their outlawed student federation.

Exact figures for the numbers holed up inside the city's Yeungnam University and Kyongbuk campus, were unclear, but student sources said they were in their hundreds, and that a few of them had begun hunger strikes.

Friday when the students gathered for a three day

rally in defiance of arrest warnings, some 200 tried to push their way off the Kyongbuk campus but were blocked by police.

Sunday night another few hundred slipped off campus and ran through city streets shouting, news reports said.

But the radical students had not resorted to their trademark firebombs and rocks, and there was no use of tear gas on the part of police.

So far at least eight students have been arrested and some 200 briefly detained and let off with warnings, television stations said.

The radicals, members of the outlawed Hanchongnyon (Federation of University Councils), branded pro-North Korea by Seoul, are calling on the police to allow them to "peacefully" hold an out-

campus election of new office bearers.

The federation is branded "pro-North Korean" by Seoul because it defines the South Korean government as "the puppet government of the U.S. imperialists."

The impasse coincided with crucial talks between the two warring Koreas in Beijing to discuss fertiliser aid and other issues.

The talks are the first direct inter-Korean government dialogue since contacts were scuttled four years ago by the sudden death of former North Korean president Kim Il-Sung.

Through its official broadcasts, Pyongyang has praised Hanchongnyon as true patriots, supporting efforts by its members to rebuild their organisation, battered by two years of arrests.

Pakistan trains crack police squad to combat terrorism

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — The first batch of Pakistani police specially trained to fight terrorism and crime gangs passed out from a training school here Monday, officials said.

The police commandos, trained by the army's Special Services Group, will be deployed in Punjab, the country's biggest province where sectarian unrest has claimed hundreds of lives in the past 16 months.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Punjab provincial government leaders attended the ceremony at the Elite Police Training School located in the suburbs of the provincial capital, Lahore.

"My government is determined to protect life and honour of all citizens," Mr. Sharif said in a speech. Terrorists will be "crushed" with an iron hand, the prime minister vowed.

Mr. Sharif said the crack

police force would enable the authorities to deal with the menace of terrorism effectively.

Pakistan was rocked recently by a chain of bomb blasts. It blamed the explosions on neighbouring rival India, which denied the allegation as baseless.

The two countries have frequently traded accusations of involvement of each other's intelligence networks in subversion and sabotage.

S. African deputy president cements China ties

BEIJING (AFP) — South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki wound up his nation's highest-level visit to China Monday by meeting the president and the premier in Beijing and pledging closer ties.

"South Africa and China established diplomatic relations on Jan. 1 and I wanted to visit China as soon as possible to see what to do with relations," Mr. Mbeki told reporters.

"China will emerge as one of the principal partners of South Africa ... and we agreed that given the scope and depth of relations that will develop, we will establish a joint commission to incorporate all of these elements," he added.

According to the South African news agency SAPA, the two sides also agreed that South African President Nelson Mandela would pay a state visit to China before the end of the year.

"There will be high level visits between our two

countries," SAPA quoted Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad as saying. He added a date had not yet been fixed.

Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian is also expected in Pretoria before the end of the year, while open invitations have been issued to Chinese President Jiang Zemin and new Premier Zhu Rongji, SAPA said.

Mr. Mbeki flew into China from Japan Friday and, in an indication of the importance Beijing attaches to the visit, met with Mr. Jiang, Mr. Zhu, new Vice-President Hu Jintao, Mr. Chi and Vice-Premier in charge of foreign affairs Qian Qichen.

"China and South Africa are developing countries without a fundamental conflict of interest and China has consistently supported the struggle of the African people for independence, especially of the South African people in their fight against racial segregation," Mr. Jiang told Mr. Mbeki.

"It is very important for developing countries to increase solidarity and China is willing to develop relations with South Africa with mutual trust, sincere friendship and all-round cooperation," he said, according to state radio.

China, which wooed South Africa with trade and investment opportunities and its traditional friendship with African nations, scored a diplomatic coup when it persuaded South Africa to switch recognition from Taiwan at the start of 1998.

Beijing's trade ministry has already predicted that trade will jump almost 30 per cent this year to \$2 billion from \$1.57 billion last year, compared with \$1.35 billion in 1996.

But exactly how trade and investment will boom is still very much up in the air.

"People here are more familiar with Asian than African economies so we will have to give it a few months so people are able

to do feasibility studies," Mr. Mbeki said.

"You will see the very practical consequences in the growth of our economic situation," he added.

Mr. Mbeki leaves Tuesday for South Korea on the third leg of his Asian tour and is expected to lobby South Korean businesses to think of South Africa as an investment opportunity.

"Essentially what we want to do in South Korea is to sensitize the South Korean government and the business community to the possibility of cooperation with South Africa and Africa," he said.

"Part of the lesson of the financial difficulties in South Korea is that it is necessary to diversify and have access to as many markets as possible," he added.

The deputy president will also make a short stop in Hong Kong before returning to South Africa on April 17.

Belgrade files charges against concentration camp chief

BELGRADE (AFP) — Yugoslav state prosecutors have filed criminal charges in Argentina against a Croatian accused of Nazi-era war crimes, a pro-government daily reported Monday.

Dinko Sakic was the former commander of a Croatian concentration camp where 500,000 people were killed during World War II.

Milan Bulajic, the head of the museum for genocide victims in Belgrade, was quoted by the newspaper as saying he was "in possession of many documents on Sakic's atrocities."

Mr. Sakic, 76, admitted on Argentine television last Monday that he had been in charge of the Jasenovac camp, but denied involvement in any killings.

Mr. Sakic reportedly entered Argentina in 1947 with an Argentine visa and had personal ties to former President Juan Peron as well as former Paraguayan dictator Alfredo Stroessner.

According to the Simon Wiesenthal centre, Mr. Sakic commanded the Jasenovac camp from December 1942 to October 1944 and was personally involved in the murder of numerous civilians.

Argentinian foreign ministry officials said last week that Mr. Sakic could not be arrested because he faces no criminal charges there.

56 dead in Tanzania mine disaster

ARUSHA, Tanzania (R) — At least 56 people were killed in a mining disaster in northern Tanzania following flash floods that caused pits to collapse, Tanzanian state radio reported Monday.

It quoted the head of rescue operations as saying 56 people died and 21 were rescued following Thursday's disaster at Mbuguni southeast of Arusha.

Regional Commissioner Daniel Ole Njoolay said a rescue team set up two days ago had gathered a list of 55 people known by authorities to have entered the Mererani mine and were missing and presumed dead.

But he said the death toll could be higher, since it was possible more miners had entered the area to work illegally.

"They managed to rescue the lives of 21 people. Three people were found dead. We suspect 55 names (of dead people) but it could be more. There could

be 100 people dead," Mr. Njoolay said by telephone from Arusha.

"The names we have so far (are those) that are suspected to be underneath, but reports said that there are other people who might have entered the pits without the authorities knowing," he told Reuters in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

The accident happened at a Tanzanian mine near the northern farming town of Arusha. Workers were trapped as deep as 300 metres after the floods caused 14 pits to collapse.

Tanzania is a semi-precious stone unique to Tanzania and is mined using relatively primitive methods, often without safety equipment.

Mr. Njoolay said the accident followed a night of heavy rains and the rescue effort was hampered by a lack of equipment and poor communications.

"The area is a hill area and we had a lot of rains and on the night of April 9, there was a landslide in

which a lot of water went down into the narrow pits and therefore some people got trapped underneath," he said.

"The task force has been working round the clock for two days now and has retrieved three dead bodies. Pumping out the water is slow because the equipment is not adequate. We need bigger pumps," he said.

"The rescue team has been digging continually in various pits trying to get out the mud and stones that have been taken down by the flood water."

The state-owned Daily News reported Monday that a list of 56 people, missing and presumed dead, was presented Sunday by mine owners to Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye who visited the area.

The newspaper had reported Sunday that some 90 people were feared dead.

The site is some 40 km southeast of Arusha and has no telephone lines.

Spanish government faces new charges of spying on Basque party

MADRID (AFP) — Spain's military intelligence agency spied on the headquarters of the political wing of the Basque extremist group ETA until 1995, a newspaper reported Monday.

The agency, known as CESID, used wiretaps and video film shot from across the street to monitor activities at the headquarters of the party, Herri Batasuna, in

Bilbao. With this and other high-tech equipment, the agency was able to follow meetings of Herri Batasuna's top leaders, El Pais said.

The paper did not say when this surveillance began or why it stopped in 1995.

The paper published what it said were minutes of a Herri Batasuna meeting in which leaders are identified by code names.

CESID already faces allegations of having conducted illegal wiretaps at Herri Batasuna offices in another Basque city, Vitoria.

The defence ministry has announced a probe of those allegations. An investigating magistrate, acting on a suit filed by Herri Batasuna, is also probing them.

Hong Kong warns swimmers of red tide alga

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong warned beachgoers Monday to stay out of the water to avoid a massive algae bloom that has killed more than 1,000 tonnes of farmed fish.

The gyrodinium algae, an occasional phenomenon called "red tide", is far worse than usual this year and Monday appeared off popular beaches.

"Traces of red tide have been found in this beach. Please leave the water," a recorded loudspeaker message warned swimmers at Shek O beach as a red warning flag was raised.

Lifeguards stood by at other beaches — Repulse Bay, Middle Bay and South Bay — warning people of the danger.

A government spokesman said the algae, which he said was believed to cause skin problems in humans, had

killed at least 1,200 tonnes of fish since it appeared in late March.

Made up of microscopic organisms, the algae absorbs much of the oxygen from the water, suffocating fish. It multiplies very quickly and turns swaths of sea a reddish brown.

"We are distributing plastic bags so that the dead fish can be collected and dumped (into landfills), so as not to cause pollution," a spokeswoman for the government told Reuters.

The government said the algae was not toxic. "The agriculture (and fisheries) department has said this algae is not toxic," the spokeswoman said.

Fish breeders reckon they have lost about HK\$70 million (\$9 million) so far, but the government says it still has to assess the losses.

"The government will then

follow up on the compensation," the spokesman said.

The Conservancy Association in Hong Kong said it believed pollution was the main reason why red tide was becoming more frequent and more severe.

"In the 1970s, we had very few red tides. In the 1980s we had more," Hung Wing-Tat, an executive member of the association, said on government radio.

"We can see that as the waters get more and more polluted the number of red tides are increasing."

In the past the algae has usually appeared for just three or four days, compared with about three weeks this time.

The red tide is the latest in a succession of health scares to hit Hong Kong. Last year there was outbreak of avian flu, which was followed this year by cholera.



Ballooning Alex Richie (left) poses with Richard Branson (centre) and Per Lindstrand in front of the Virgin Global Challenger balloon in Marakech before a round-the-world attempt, in January 1997. Richie died in hospital, April 13, from severe injuries sustained in a parachuting accident earlier in 1998, whilst preparing for another attempt to circumnavigate the world in a Virgin balloon (Reuters photo)

Serbian doctors attacked by terrorists

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — A Serbian medical team was attacked at the weekend by suspected Albanian rebels in a southwestern village of the troubled Kosovo province, a Serbian-language daily reported Monday.

The doctors, who were supposed to vaccinate children against polio, were arrested in the village of Glodjane and their car was confiscated, the daily Jedinstvo said.

It added that the team was abducted to "the headquarters of the Albanian terrorist gang in the centre of Glodjane," where they were threat-

ened with being killed "several times."

"After two hours of being mistreated, the members of the medical team were released, but without their personal things and medical equipment which were seized," Jedinstvo reported, adding that a police probe was underway.

Ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of Kosovo's population and since February more than 90 have been killed by Serbian authorities in a crackdown on militants seeking independence.

Belgrade revoked Kosovo's autonomy in 1989.

German man dies after toilet explodes

BONN (R) — A German camper died from injuries received when a camp-site toilet exploded as he tried to light a cigarette, blasting him through a closed window, police said Monday.

Police in the town of Montabaur south of Bonn

said the explosion Thursday appeared to have been caused by leaking gas from the septic tank or a defective natural gas pipe.

The 32-year-old man was taken to hospital suffering from burns, and died Saturday.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.
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Right mission and place

THE EUROPEAN Union's decision to create a humanitarian fund worth about JD2.4 million for the needy in Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip may be small in size but it is certainly big in purpose. The aid package is being managed by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) to serve the urgent needs of vulnerable peoples situated in the four areas.

It is a well-known fact that due to the repeated turmoil in the region, many people have had to flee their homes and seek sanctuary in Jordan. Jordan is full of vulnerable people from Iraq who have left their country back in 1990 and 1991 due to the armed conflict that erupted there and have found themselves stranded here with little means to support themselves. Others including Palestinian refugees who are especially deprived of basic needs for even daily sustenance are also in urgent need for emergency support. This is where ECHO fits in and fills the existing vacuum.

A special tribute to the European Union (EU) is therefore in order for launching this new humanitarian campaign whose mandate goes beyond the other already existing institutionalised forms of aid to Palestinian refugees. Jordan was rightly chosen to host the head office of ECHO due to its strategic location in the Middle East. This is not to mention that the Kingdom has repeatedly given refuge to hundreds of thousands of refugees from Iraq and elsewhere in the region. Such a burden vindicates the selection of Amman to serve as the ECHO's regional office.

An additional promise lies in the manner in which ECHO will conduct its work in the area. ECHO's network of operations would synchronise not only with European NGOs, United Nations agencies and other international organisations operating in the region but also with local partners in the government and otherwise. Once the humanitarian operations of ECHO get started in earnest, the actual extent of the work ahead would be gauged. We trust that more funding would be made available to ECHO in the future in order to cope fully with the challenge before us.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek Monday criticised the idea of a two-day weekend in Jordan saying this can only be counter productive. If the two-day weekend is to be introduced — that is Thursday and Friday — then Jordan will be cut off from the world for four days at a time when the Kingdom is in dire need of further opening in the age of globalisation and market economy, said the writer. He said the two-day weekend is suitable for the advanced nations with very high production level but not for Jordan, a developing nation trying to improve its national economy. The writer said the government employees would of course welcome a two-day rest every week and would support the idea. He noted that after one o'clock the employees are normally slacking off in their work and many leave even before office hours officially end at two o'clock. He said extending office hours to three o'clock is pointless since the employees' productivity will be at its lower ebb. Dr. Fanek said the government has more important issues to tackle instead of seeking to ensure further leisure time for its employees.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan described as dangerous the ongoing dispute between Hamas and the Palestinian National Authority in the wake of the murder of Mohieddin Sharif, a Hamas leader. The only beneficiary of such a dispute is Israel which gloats at divisions among the Palestinians and which is expected to further harden its position with regard to the redeployment of its forces in the West Bank, said the writer. He said various Palestinian factions have succeeded in retaining national unity despite the differences over the Oslo accord and have to date succeeded in preventing Israel from creating dissent among their leaders. But he said the current split over the death of Sharif is threatening to wreck this unity and render the Palestinians weak in the face of Israel's practices. Despite the war of words between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, added the writer, it is not too late to mend fences and end the dispute.

The View from Fourth Circle

Acknowledging the shared, ugly history of real people

By Rami G. Khouri

IN A STRIKING irony of life and history, the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 is being re-enacted in some ways this year by some of the same people who fought on the ground half a century ago. We see this in the transformation of the jubilee commemoration of Israel's birth in 1948 into a simultaneous acknowledgement of the Palestinian trauma of that year's 'nakba' — the mass exodus of frightened, often terrorised Palestinians who sought to escape the reality or only the reports of Jewish massacres of Palestinian villagers.

Palestinians call 1948 their 'nakba' — meaning a cataclysmic disaster or catastrophe — because somewhere around 700,000 Palestinians were dislocated from their ancestral homes and ended up as displaced or exiled refugees within a period of months, from November 1947 through May 1948. This was more than half the entire Arab Palestinian population — the equivalent of some 30 million British people finding themselves as refugees in France, Ireland and Sweden between today and September of this year.

To the credit of some Israelis, international journalists, and other decent people around the world, for the first time in modern history Israel's gains and the Palestinians' losses are being acknowledged as two sides of the same coin. This process reached one of its many milestones this week because of the anniversary of the massacre that Jewish forces perpetrated against the Palestinian Arab village of Deir Yassin, near Jerusalem, on April 9, 1948, resulting in scores of Arab civilian deaths.

The nature and pace of what is going on these days in this regard are worth noting. For in this process, we may be able to see the seeds of more formidable peace-making yet to come between Arabs and Israelis. Palestinians and other Arabs have spoken for years of the reasonably well documented incidents of Jewish terror and ethnic cleansing that Zionist forces used to vacate much of Palestine of its Arab inhabitants, in order to make room for Jewish immigrants and refugees. But the world and most Jews had no time to deal with these issues in the recent past, primarily, I suspect, because of more pressing concerns. The urgent need to overcome the Jewish trauma of being subjected to genocide in Europe took precedence over all other moral, historical, political and human issues. This blind spot in the

Jewish and Israeli psyche was understandable during a certain period of history; events today indicate, however, that this blind spot is not sustainable forever.

An established, strong Israeli state and a worldwide Jewish citizenry living in unprecedented security, acceptance and pride can now discuss the facts of 1947-48 with greater truth and composure. The most important point about those ugly facts is that they remain largely disputed, and hotly contested — which is precisely why they have to be raised, discussed and agreed upon.

Deir Yassin has become the symbol and focal point of this discussion for four important and related reasons: first, the inhuman and bloody nature of the attack and the killings; second, the deliberate Zionist political aim of terrorising Palestinians and encouraging them to flee; third, Deir Yassin's symbolism of the wider conflict between Zionism and Palestinian-Arab national rights; and fourth, the still imprecise accounts of the events that took place in 1948.

It is fascinating to note, therefore, that recent research and public discussion of the Deir Yassin massacre by Arabs and Israelis alike have more than halved the number of Arabs said to have died there, from over 200 to just over 100. The political memory and significance of Deir Yassin today are slightly different from what they were five months or five years ago. This transformation is difficult for both sides, but ultimately it is also positive and healing. I suspect. The political psychologists need to give us their views on this point.

Similarly, new research into the number of Palestinian villages and settlements that were attacked, terrorised, destroyed or vacated in 1947-48 has increased the traditional figure of around 400 to over 600. New discoveries are being made of Jewish massacres or atrocities against Palestinian villages, such as the killing of around 50 Palestinians in the village of Abu Shusha in May 1948. We are also hearing some stories of personal heroism and mutual humanitarianism on both sides, including individual Palestinians and Jews who saved each other's children in neighbourhoods that their families had shared peacefully for decades. The past is not all about death and hatred. Some of it is also about life and respect.

Many Israelis and Palestinians have recently manifested new-found pragmatism in terms of implementing the Oslo

peace process, despite its many glaring flaws. The 50th anniversary of the events of 1948 has prompted some Israelis and Palestinians to extend this realistic attitude back in time — specifically to look more soberly and truthfully at what really happened in 1948. This is an important and urgent process that should be encouraged, for only by agreeing on the truths and facts of the past can we hope to achieve justice and peace in our lifetimes, and then perhaps reconciliation and solidarity among the next generations of Arabs and Israelis.

The current Israeli television series Tkuma, about the founding and the modern history of Israel, is a case in point on the Israeli side. It has forced many Israelis to confront some of the darker sides of their national experience, including the use of terror and ethnic cleansing against Arabs in 1948, and domestic policies of discrimination against non-white, non-European Jews ever since. Some Palestinian survivors of Deir Yassin are stating that only around 100 people died in the attack by Jews, not the nearly 250 that had been widely reported by Jewish, Arab and international parties in the past five decades. Both these examples of coming to grips with the facts of the past should be acknowledged for their courage and profound importance, so that they may encourage more of the same among a wider circle of people.

Many of the people who took part in the events of 1947-48 are still alive, healthy, and in possession of good memories and valuable archives. The facts of the recent past should not be difficult to document accurately. Such a process of truthful documentation can only help both sides to heal their wounds, reconstruct their real histories, and find the security and normalcy they crave and deserve — but that still evades them both.

This is going to be a long, slow, and difficult process for both sides, but the important point is that it has started. This may be the most important thing that Israelis, Palestinians and other Arabs may celebrate this year — not separate commemorations of statehood and 'nakba', but rather the grudging acknowledgement that they share a modern history that is at once heroic and dishonourable, like the history of all normal societies, and real people.

Right-wing fury slams at Israel's TV history programme

By Eric Silver

ISRAEL'S PUBLIC service television is fighting off angry demands from right-wing ministers and MPs to pull a critical 22-part series on the first 50 years of the Jewish state.

The series, 'Tkumah' ('Rebirth'), has shone a harsh light on Israel's treatment of its Arab minority and its oriental Jewish immigrants in the episodes screened so far. A surprise hit with Israelis, it mercilessly showed how national heroes such as Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan squandered the opportunity for peace in the years between the 1967 and 1973 wars.

A programme being screened this month depicts what Israelis call 'terror' and the Palestinians' 'armed struggle' from both sides of the barricade, using footage from PLO archives captured during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, as well as interviews with Israeli victims and fighters.

Yehoram Gaon, a popular actor and singer who introduced each episode, sparked the row by resigning from the series.

Limor Livnat, the Likud communications minister, demanded that the

broadcasting authority take it off the air immediately and urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to intervene. "I don't know any normal nation that would present the other side's position so favourably," she said. "That... has caused severe damage to the state of Israel."

"We have grown up. We're no longer living in the days when the news was controlled from the prime minister's office" — Israeli broadcaster

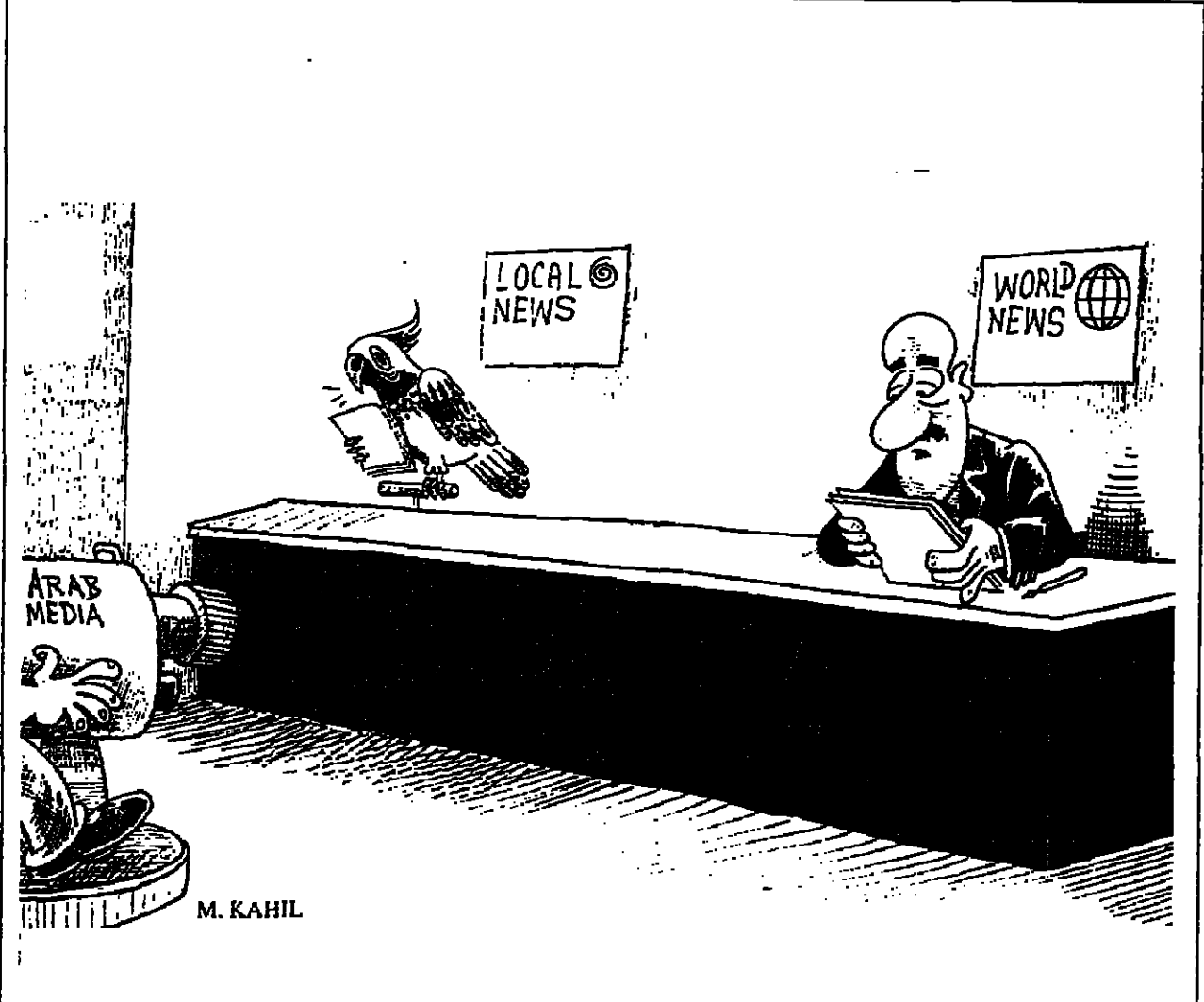
Hanan Porat, a settler MP, called on Tkumah's producers to make a second series from a "national" perspective. Moshe Peled, the deputy education minister, accused the documentary makers of presenting half-truths in the guise of history. The authority rejected these strictures, though it will follow the more controversial episodes with a live debate. One veteran broadcaster said privately: "We have grown up. We're no longer living in the days when the news was controlled from the prime minister's office."

Spokesman Zvi Lidar told The Independent: "We knew we were picking at open wounds. But each programme was made with the help of... historians representing different political views and different approaches to history."

Ronit Weiss-Berkowitz, who directed the episode on armed struggle, defended her treatment. "At times the film adopted the other side's point of view, and those are pictures we are not used to seeing," she said. "One of the objectives was to understand that blood was split on the other side as well."

Ilan Pape, a historian at the University of Haifa who has challenged the Zionist version of the Israeli state's formative years, said Tkumah was a sign that such criticism had become legitimate. "It will be more difficult to limit the debate now," he said.

— The Independent



LETTERS

A show of one-upmanship

To the Editor:

EVERY NOW and then, the Iraqi media display children on the verge of death and others in coffins in a mass funeral and a lot of noise is made about the suffering of the millions of Iraqis. All eventually blamed on the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq, which is preventing Iraq from selling oil to import food and medicine and other humanitarian needs for its people. Many people in the Arab World and elsewhere, react in sympathy, and vilify the ruthless imperialists for their insensitivity to the suffering millions in Iraq! Are the imperialists really to blame?

In Baghdad city, there are enough mosques to accommodate all the devout Muslims in the city and maybe more. On April 10th Al Ra'i daily newspaper, heralds to its readers, in eye-opening and eyebrow-raising detail the plush mosque that is to be built on a sprawling area in the middle of Baghdad, which was once an airport (Al-Muthana); the mosque building alone was to cover 3000 sq. metres, we are told that nothing like it exists anywhere, dwarfing the famous King Mohammad Mosque in Morocco, with so many more minarets and higher than any that exist anywhere, supposedly reaching closer to God, etc.?

Ten years or so ago, Morocco's mosque cost that country \$500 million, no less. Imagine what a grander mosque would cost at today's prices. The aim to outdo is obvious, and in the meantime millions of Iraqis barely eke-out an existence, and three or so million of them decided to leave the country for the same reasons.

Omar Abbas
Amman

The cloning of Christ?

To the Editor:

A STRANGE story appeared in the Al Ra'i Arabic daily on April 11, stating that David Rolph, a movie producer, is planning to do a film based on cloning Jesus Christ from DNA taken from a piece of Christ's clothing known as the "Tun cloth." I am really amazed and disgusted at the reaction of the Christian world towards an insulting idea.

The few voices heard are hardly noticed or cared for by the producer. The whole story reminds me of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" which say "to obtain control over public opinion it is first necessary to confuse it" and from the 4th Protocol which might be of considerable interest to the clergymen and the Christian church. "It is for this reason that we must undermine faith, eradicate from the minds of Gentiles the very principles of God and Soul and replace these conceptions by mathematical calculations and material desires." And from Protocol 9: "we have misled, stupefied and demoralised the youth of the Gentiles by means of education in principles and theories, patently false to us, but which we have inspired."

I turn to the Christian world in Europe to wake up and protest courageously and with a loud voice against such an insulting film to the Christians, and I am afraid I can't ask much from the American Christians in the United States as apparently a large number of them have been Judaised long ago without realising it.

Violet Habbib
AmmanBy Kirk Albrecht
in Amman

THE SHEHADIH laboured to start to open a seminary in his hometown of Jordan. As he held his degree in 1990 from the Theological Seminary, the young Shehadeh dreamed of starting a graduate school in Jordan to serve as a base for students in a region that is more than 90 per cent Muslim. He returned to Jordan, took his vision to the authorities in the Muslim country, twice that of Shehadeh for training with government approval. And Christian leaders found his doctrinal statement too radical. Things began to change as the government worked on democratic reforms that would allow the country to accept support. Shehadeh had again for permission to start a school. The government's refusal to grant the school's opening was into the school's common an article allowing dialogue with Muslims.

Strategic location
 The Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) is in its year of legal operation. The

Elizabeth Olson
 In his third report on human violations against a U.N. investigator in Gaza and West Bank are suffering from "violent behaviour of many men who have been in military jails and often tortured," said Hannu, the investigator. He has been that there are "more disaffected

and violent" T develop depression, anxiety, and traumatic stress toward their families. In his report, he said this has affected 50,000 children in Gaza Strip alone, mated on the recent trips there. Halonen, a report to the meeting of the Commission on the Rights, which abuses in the world, the only special aitor charged with ing into reported

U.N. rep

Substituting the God of Israel for the state of Israel

Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne (The Fundamental Myths of Israeli Politics)
By Roger Garaudy
Samizdat 1996

Editor's note: Following is a review of the first part of the original French text of Roger Garaudy's book.

ROGER GARAUDY is a well-known French writer and philosopher. He never ceased to fight for liberty and freedom of opinion. During World War II he was deported to the concentration camps. He wrote several books on communism, religion, Palestine and Israel. One of his latest books is *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* for which he was tried in Paris under the Gayssot-Fabius Law for having doubted the existence of the gas chambers and the number of Jews massacred by Nazi Germany during World War II. He is against bigoted fundamentalism whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim. To combat fundamentalism he produced three books: "Grandeur et Décadence de l'islam", "Avons-nous besoin de Dieu - Vers une guerre de religion" and the book reviewed here.

In 1982 during the invasion of Lebanon by Israel, Garaudy together with the French writers Father Lelong, Pastor Mathiot and Jacques Fauvet condemned this invasion in the newspaper *Le Monde* as being the result of political Zionist logic. All his books have been translated into several languages.

The book under review denounces the political Zionist heresy which consists of substituting the God of Israel for the State of Israel. Garaudy calls the latter the nuclear aircraft carrier of the United States of America, the leader of the

world which holds the Middle East oil the sinews of the development of the Western world. Garaudy says Israel justifies its aggressions theologically by a fundamentalist reading of the Inspired Books thus transforming myth into history. For example the grand symbol of the unconditional submission of Abraham to God and His blessing of all people of the earth have been transformed into a tribal conception and thus "the conquered land" became "the promised land."

A new mythology has developed. Garaudy says, in that the State of Israel is the response of God to the Holocaust as if Israel is the only refuge of victims of the barbarity of Hitler at a time when Yitzhak Shamir himself offered his alliance with Hitler until his arrest by the British authorities for collaboration with the German enemy and for terrorism. Garaudy asks: Does one become anti-Semitic because one says that the Jews have suffered a lot but were not the only people to suffer? Is it just because television shows depict Jews as the only victims? The world forgets that greater genocides occurred in the world. What about the 60 million Indians in America, 100 million blacks in America,

the millions who were savagely killed by the nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 50 million killed in World War II.

The object of the book is to uncover the ideological disguise of Israeli policy so as to avert its confusion with the great traditions of the prophets of Israel. Garaudy adds that he has never ceased to believe in the messages of the prophets even after thirty-five years of militancy in the Communist Party from which he was kicked out for having stated that "the Soviet Union is not a socialist state."

Garaudy says that he wished to contribute to the struggle for peace but a real

peace founded on truth and international law. He pays tribute to the new Israeli historians of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who together with the Peace Movement of Israelis question the political Zionist myths which led to the killings committed by Baruch Goldstein in Hebron and the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by Yigal Amir.

Is Palestine a promised land or a conquered land? Garaudy asks. And he quotes from the texts of many eminent authors and researchers that showed the so-called promised land given to Israel is a myth because it cannot be affirmed that at some definite point in time, in history, that God presented himself to an historical person called Abraham upon whom God conferred the legal possession of the land of Canaan. Nor can we agree with certain Christians who consider the promises of the Old Testament as constituting a legitimate territorial claim of the State of Israel.

From the purely Jewish point of view Garaudy quotes Rabbi Hirsh who says: "Zionism wishes to define the Jewish people as a national entity. This is a heresy." Rabbi Elmer Berger stated to the effect that the actual State of Israel is not the accomplishment of a biblical prophecy, that the actual Israeli policy has destroyed the spiritual meaning and significance of Israel. Prophetic tradition shows clearly that the sanctity of land does not depend on its soil nor on its people by its presence on the territory. What is really sacred Rabbi Berger says, and worthy of Zion is the Divine Alliance as expressed in the people's conduct and behaviour. Thus the State of Israel has no right to claim that it is the accomplishment of the messianic divine. Zionist totalitarianism which strives to subdue all the Jewish people by violence or by force, makes this people like others. (Elmer Berger: "Prophecy,

Zionism and the State of Israel).

Garaudy contests the claim that the Jews or the Israelites are the chosen people or that monotheism was born with the Old Testament. Monotheism was confirmed only at a later date by the prophets between the years 550-539 BC as many deities were adored before that date. However, Monotheism existed in ancient Babylon (God Mardok) and ancient Egypt at the time of the Pharaoh Akhnaton.

The Old Testament especially Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua tell how the Israelites treated savagely the peoples they conquered although some of the stories are mere myths. For example

Garaudy points out, archaeological excavations have revealed that Jericho was uninhabited when the Israelites came in the XIII century B.C. as it was destroyed before that date. Those versions of the Old Testament have taught the modern Israelis to imitate Moses and Joshua in not only plundering Palestine but also in the expulsion and massacre of its inhabitants (See Numbers Chapter XXI para 35, Deuteronomy Chapter XII para 24) Garaudy asks: Did not Sharon, Meir Kahane, Menachem Begin and others treat the Palestinians as the ancient Israelites treated the ancient peoples such as the Canaanites, the Amorites and the Amelakites mentioned in the Old Testament. Did not Menachem Begin follow the example of Joshua when his Irgun troop stormed Deir Yassin and massacred men, women and children so as to frighten the unarmed Palestinians and force them to flee? There are many examples of Jewish fundamentalism: Begin called on the Jews not only to kick out the Arabs but also to seize all Palestine. And Dayan once said: "If we have the Bible and if we are considered the people of the Bible we should also have all the territories of the Bible."

Garaudy quotes several versions from

BOOK REVIEW

the Bible (Exodus, Deuteronomy) and from the Talmud showing the radicalism of Israelis and their apartheid conduct. Haim Cohen a former Judge of the Supreme Court of Israel once observed: "The bitter irony is that the same biological and racist thesis which was propagated by the Nazis and which had inspired the infamous Nuremberg laws have been taken as the basis of the definition of Judaism in the bosom of the State of Israel." (See Joseph Badi, Fundamental Laws of the State of Israel) Rabbi Cohen author of the "Talmud" wrote: "The peoples of the world could be divided between Israel and other peoples taken en bloc. Israel is the chosen people: this is a principal dogma."

This Jewish radicalism, Garaudy says, has served as a model for many radicals. For example Thomas Nelson says in his book: "The Puritans of Massachusetts": "The colonist puritans of America in their hunting of the Indians and possessing their lands, they invoked Joshua and the sacred extermination of the Amalekites and the Philistines."

Garaudy realised that the publishing of *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* would bring upon him the thundering attack of the Jews. He has for nearly half a century published his books without any difficulty from his French publishers. But *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* was published on his own account in Samizdat because he severely criticised the Zionist heresy upon which Israeli policy is based, and such criticism violates a taboo in France since the promulgation of the Gayssot-Fabius Law of July 13, 1990 which has restored in France "the opinion offence" which existed during the Second Empire.

Pascal B. Karmy

Jordan emerges as new hub for training pastors Evangelical school teaches Mideast students

By Kirk Albrecht
in Amman

IMAD SHEHADEH laboured for five years to open a seminary in his adopted homeland of Jordan. As he earned his degree in 1990 from Dallas Theological Seminary, the soft-spoken Shehadeh dreamed of opening a graduate school in Amman to serve as a base for Christians in a region that is more than 90 per cent Muslim.

When he returned to Jordan, few endorsed his vision. Authorities in the Muslim country twice shut down Shehadeh for training without government approval. And many Christian leaders found his original doctrinal statement too restrictive.

But things began to change as Jordan's government worked through democratic reforms that liberalised the country.

Realising he needed to have the government's support, Shehadeh applied again for permission to open a school. The government's Ministry of Culture not only granted approval for the school to open, but also wrote into the school's constitution an article allowing interfaith dialogue with Muslims.

Strategic location

Today, Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) is in its third year of legal operation. The

evangelical school has unprecedented freedoms in a Muslim country. In some Arabic-speaking countries, Muslims who convert to Christianity are in danger of losing their jobs, families, or lives.

By embracing a broad doctrinal statement, the 43-year-old Shehadeh has gained the support of numerous churches. Jordanian leaders from the country's five main denominations are on the seminary board.

Already the school has 28 resident and visiting faculty — half of them from Jordan. Nearly 150 students from nine Arab countries — Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Sudan — have been accepted to study at the school.

The interdenominational school offers undergraduate and graduate-level training. JETS does not have the governmental or access restrictions of other Christian schools in the Mideast.

Shehadeh says the Middle East is experiencing unprecedented growth in the number of evangelicals. Yet there are not enough leaders to follow up new believers. Often churches are small, and local leadership has little theological training. But JETS is training 45 Iraqi students to return to a country with only a handful of seminary-trained pastors. JETS students are eager learners. Last year, students started three dozen home groups in

an effort to gain experience in church planting.

Reaching individuals

Jordan's freedoms, its central location in the Middle East, and its peace with Israel since 1994 have all been of strategic importance for JETS.

Nowhere is that seen more clearly than in the life of its students. For example, Rumail Yousef, an Iraqi electrician by trade, remained in Iraq while thousands of his countrymen fled after the Gulf War when United Nations sanctions began to cripple the country's economy. In the midst of economic woes, Baghdad's main evangelical church began to grow. From a core of 25 saints, the church now boasts attendance of 800 on Sundays.

Burgeoning growth meant a greater need for trained leadership, so in 1993 the church sent Rumail away to study theology before returning to help pastor the flock. But his visa to Egypt, where he had applied to study in the Presbyterian seminary in Cairo, never came. After a year's wait, he applied to study at the Baptist seminary in Lebanon, but authorities in that country also turned him away. So Rumail applied for admission in the bachelor's programme at JETS. He saw no other alternative. "JETS can give me the best train-

ing I could get for ministry here in the Middle East, so God opened this door for me," says Rumail, who is being encouraged by professors to stay and finish a master's degree before returning to Baghdad.

Rumail is not alone. Behind impoverished Iraq, the second-highest percentage of JETS students come from war-torn Sudan. For these students, study in Beirut or Cairo is difficult because of political tensions. The hope is that most will return to minister in their own cultures. Because Jordan has friendly relations with both Sudan and Iraq, students can more easily come for training. JETS's reputation with Jordan's security forces means that students can obtain coveted student residence visas.

Extension programmes

The idea of an evangelical seminary in the Muslim-dominated Middle East may seem incongruous. Yet there are at least 15 evangelical theological education institutes in the region, including seminaries, Bible schools, and extension learning programmes.

Jordan is assuming a leadership role. Since 1981, the Programme for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE) in Amman has trained more than 1,000 Christians in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq in Bible and theology.

Through local churches, PTEE fills a crucial role in reaching potential leaders who cannot study in an institution due to location or cost.

"The issue isn't competition with schools like JETS," says PTEE executive director Richard Hart. "The issue is access. Our courses can help Christians identify gifts in ministry calling, which can lead to further training." PTEE is also less expensive: a class costs \$2, while one course at JETS is 20 times as much.

JETS and PTEE are founding members of a new group called Middle East Association for Theological Education. MEATE is trying to help its members share experiences with one another and the international community. "We're aware of what is happening internationally," says Hart. "Arab theological education can stand on its own — it has something to say to the West."

Jordan's openness has come under King Hussein, who has been in power since 1952. His younger brother HRH Crown Prince Hassan has pushed Muslim-Christian relations to a new level with the opening of the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies. The institute has established a working relationship with JETS, and Shehadeh has contributed an article to their journal on the topic "Do Muslims and Christians have the same God?"

Challenges Remain

Limited space and finances are a problem for JETS. "We could easily accept a lot more students if we had the space, the faculty, and administrators," Shehadeh says. Last summer, JETS had 130 applicants; only 11 could be admitted because of limited capacity.

JETS is meeting in rented quarters and needs \$2.5 million to buy land and build new facilities. In February, the Indianapolis-based Overseas Council (OC) announced a \$95,000 gift to JETS.

"When the door opened in Russia we were ready," says OC U.S. board chair Norm Miller. "We ought to be thinking about the same type of response in the Middle East." JETS is young and faces many challenges. While the local church is encouraging, Arab believers have been unable to assume much financial support. Graduates will soon outnumber pastoral opportunities. Still, with an unreached population in the region of 200 million, the need for what JETS can help fill is waiting to be met.

"The home of the early church is the most needy mission field today," Shehadeh says. "We want to see a strong, vibrant church across the Middle East."

— Christianity Today

U.N. report cites suffering of Palestinian children

By Elizabeth Olson

GENEVA — In his third annual report on human rights violations against Palestinians, a U.N. independent investigator says that a large number of children in Gaza and the West Bank are suffering because of violent treatment of their fathers.

The behaviour of many Palestinian men who have served terms in Israeli-operated jails and who have been mistreated — and often tortured — is tearing at the Arab social fabric, said Hannu Halinen, the investigator. One result has been that children are "more aggressive, disobedient

and violent." The men develop depression, paranoia, anxiety and post-traumatic stress, causing many to behave violently toward their families, he said in his report, which was issued last month. This has affected some 50,000 children in the Gaza Strip alone, he estimated on the basis of recent trips there.

Halinen, a Finnish envoy in Berlin, made his report to the annual meeting of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, which examines abuses in countries around the world. He is the only special investigator charged with looking into reported human

rights violations by one country alone: Israel. Other investigators look into broader categories of abuse. His authority does not extend to the treatment of Palestinians by their own police in areas now controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

The children whose fathers have served time in Israel's jails have an "inability to relate to parents, teachers and other children," and tens of thousands of them suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders, he said in his report.

"These emotional disorders have long-term effects, make children

more aggressive, disobedient and violent, affect their dignity and lower their self-esteem," he said.

This hatred, he warned, could "itself be perpetuated later on by those same children."

The Israeli government does not cooperate with Halinen, contending that his focus on Israel alone is unjust. He relies on information from non-governmental organisations, including health and relief groups, U.N. agencies and Palestinian officials and individuals.

"The tension is so high there, it is clearly difficult to assess what is the most pressing problem,"

he said after releasing his report. He criticised Israel for closing off access from the West Bank and Gaza Strip for various periods in retaliation for terrorist attacks. This leaves many Palestinians in financial straits because so many depend on income from jobs in Israel, he said.

As a result, Halinen said, more children are going to work to help support their families. As many as 25 per cent of such children are believed to be their family's sole breadwinners. Many of these families "eat only one meal a day and significantly reduce their intake of protein,"

he said, and added that anaemia and rickets had increased among Palestinian children. In addition, 56 per cent of families whose families are cut off from such income are forced to borrow money to buy food, he said.

He has urged the 53-country Commission on Human Rights to broaden its mandate to include the Palestinian Authority's treatment of its people. Otherwise, he contends, his mandate "takes for granted that all the violations are by one side — Israel."

Despite his limited charge, part of his 18-page report dealt with

both Palestinian Authority and Israeli mistreatment of detainees. Up to 1,200 people have been detained by Palestinian officials, a situation he attributed to a "complex legal system, lack of legislation, and insufficient training and education." Fourteen people are said to have died in Palestinian detention.

Israel is holding an estimated 3,500 Palestinians in prisons and detention centres. They include seven women and 70-90 youths under 18. Torture is prevalent, Halinen said. He said it included placing hoods over prisoners' heads for sensory deprivation, sleep and

food deprivation, exposure to loud music, forcing prisoners to maintain painful body positions, exposure to extremes of cold and heat, and violent shaking.

He concluded that the building and expansion of Israeli settlements had worsened the human rights situation in the occupied territories. He said that if Israel moved ahead with a plan for the disputed Har Homa settlement in largely Arab East Jerusalem, it would affect both the economy and social stability of the Palestinian community in that area.

— The New York Times

The company's officials have repeatedly expressed their opposition to the government decision to sell the bulk of its stake to a strategic partner and urged it to reverse the decision or at least give preference to local investors

In other remarks, Dr. Ensour revealed that the government will "soon" announce the Aqaba region as a "free zone area."

joint ventures that the two sides will establish in line with an agreement reached during a visit by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali to Qatar in 1997.

The government's decision to raise prices has provided the excuse to

Worsening conditions have led to labour unrest as employers, including the government, are hard-

The latest fall in the Iranian currency comes after three years of relative stability resulting from the government's move to curb and regulate imports.

The IMF, which assembled multi-billion-dollar bailout packages for Thailand,

Over the next five years, the report said, "global economic growth is still projected to exceed the average rate" of 3.75 per cent in the past quar-

The report said U.S. economic performance last year was "exceptionally favourable with the fastest growth in nine

The IMF forecasts negative

The report welcomed measures taken by Brazil, Argentina and Russia to protect themselves from Asia's crisis spreading to their countries.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You're going to be powerful this morning, so don't procrastinate. Make decisions and put them into effect as quickly as possible. Your competition is losing strength, but will have a brief rally. You need to get your plan into effect before that happens.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) That check in the mail could finally be arriving; or maybe, at long last, you're going to get that promised promotion. If you haven't been promised a promotion, put in for one. If that's out of the question, look for a better job. Check out every possibility you can think of.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

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	B	O	A		A	D	E	F	T		
					A	D	A	M	S	T	
	H	O	L	L	E	R	S	T	E		
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HE WAS TO SAY ALL THINGS ABOUT ME AS PARTS PARTNER. HE'D HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO SAY ABOUT ME AS A POOL PARTNER!

"Today my boss offered me my own private office. Well actually, it's the box our new copier came in."

gested by the above cartoon.

JP Yen	0.0077	1.4066	0.4425	1.4066
CA Dollar	0.5986	1.3049	0.4527	1.3049
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0114	1.3125	1.0114
NL Guilder	0.4972	85.73	0.2618	85.73
FR Franc	0.1635	0.2860	0.2067	0.2860

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	210.5	311
Silver (oz's)	6.36	6.39
Platinum (oz's)	425	427
3 Months	1438	1442
6 Months	1438	1442

Course	Index	Value
New York	DOW JONES	2944.3

London	FT-SE 100	7,774.8
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	8,224.8
Paris	CAC 40	16,217.58
Frankfurt	DAX	3,834.42
		53.17.21

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Oil (cr/bbl)	41.25	41.25

1824	Spot
255.6	Spot
0	Spot
28.03	Spot
148	Spot
C	Spot
40C	Spot

JORDAN M.



villas and

1 hour
Develop your
at our shop
* **JUMBO**
30% larger
* Free
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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Muasher proposes link between ministries dealing in economic affairs

**** JORDAN IS now qualified to move to the level of advanced countries as the opportunity available today will not be staying forever. Today's opportunities should be seized to boost Jordan at all levels, before it's too late,** says a prominent businessman and an economist.

In a recent lecture Anis Muasher said the Kingdom has been able to carry out basic requirements and infrastructure over the past decades to qualify the country to build a sound economy.

But despite such progress, Mr. Muasher said, economic growth has not met the ambitions, and per capita income has remained below the hoped for level. He went on to say that the employment rate has also remained low, with the social equilibrium between various classes below the satisfactory level.

"The middle class has shrunk and, up to a certain point, the more fortunate class has become more affluent while the poor class has become larger," the lecturer stressed.

Noting that Jordan has continued to depend on borrowing and on foreign aid in the absence of a clear strategy that would carry it to self-reliance, Mr. Muasher indicated that such economic weakness has weakened the state's political stand. He explained that in this regard, the state has to depend on "others to cover the continued deficit in the balance of payments and the chronic deficit in the government's income needed to cover general expenditure and debt servicing."

As a result of the financial pressure faced by the state treasury, the lecturer saw the task of the Ministry of Finance becoming more of collecting funds than of caring for the national economy. He said that the achievements of the ministries of finance, industry and trade, planning and tourism have all been limited within a narrow concept and were not necessarily linked in the comprehensive national economic cycle.

"As such, the prime minister became the only watchman for the general national economy by being the president of the Higher Economic Council," Mr. Muasher said noting the premier would not have enough time to carry the heavy burden of this task. "It could be beneficial to appoint a deputy prime minister for economic affairs or to reconsider the structure and responsibilities of concerned ministries by linking them in the comprehensive national economic cycle (Al Doustour).

Lebanese manufacturers seeking deals in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A delegation of Lebanese manufacturers held talks with Iraqi Industry Minister Adnan Abdul Majid here Monday on boosting trade between the two countries, the official INA news agency said.

The delegation, led by Jacques Sarraf, president of the manufacturers' association, told Mr. Majid they wanted to carry out joint projects with Iraqi manufacturers and contract to sell Lebanese goods to Iraq, the agency said.

On Sunday, the Lebanese manufacturers met with Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mahdi Saleh to discuss Iraq's requirements under the "oil-for-food" accord with the United Nations.

The agreement allows Iraq, which has been under an embargo since it invaded neighbouring Kuwait in 1990, to sell limited quantities of oil in order to buy necessities.

Sarraf also visited Baghdad last year at the start of normalisation of relations between Iraq and Syria, which is the main power in Lebanon.



Minister Khalaf and Ambassador Battiscombe sign the memorandum of understanding Monday (Petra photo)

Study shows executive pay growing faster than workers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Corporate chiefs in the largest U.S. companies are paid 209 times the average factory worker, according to a study released by the largest U.S. labour federation.

The AFL-CIO's Executive PayWatch survey said compensation for top executives was just 44 times the average worker's pay in 1995.

"CEOs get multimillion-dollar sweetheats deals while working families suffer downsizing and falling wages," said Richard Trumka, secretary treasurer of the AFL-CIO.

The AFL-CIO report built a database of executive pay figures from the Standard and Poor's list of the top 500 corporations.

The AFL-CIO report said the average executive pay increase in 1997 was 38 per cent, compared with three to four per cent for most workers.

A separate report issued by the Institute for Policy Studies linked many high-paid executive packages to companies that laid off large numbers of workers.

It said American Express Chief Executive Officer Harvey Golub earned 229 per cent more last year at the same time the company announced layoffs of 3,300 workers.

"For ordinary Americans, there is no greater symbol of betrayal by corporate America than CEOs cashing in as they lay off workers," said Chuck Collins, co-director of United for a Fair Economy, a labor advocacy organisation.

U.K. provides 1.5m pound grant to support Jordan's educational reform

AMMAN (J.T.) — Planning Minister Rima Khalaf and British Ambassador Christopher Battiscombe Monday signed a memorandum of understanding under which the U.K. provides a grant to Jordan of 1.5 million pounds over a period of three years for a Capacity Building Project for the Ministry of Education.

The project is funded by the U.K.'s Department for International Development. Its aim is to support the Ministry of Education's efforts towards raising the quality of management and teaching at the central, governorate and school levels.

The support is focused on providing training and consultancy advice with the aim of improving management skills at both the ministry and governorate levels as well as enhancing the role of the school as the "focus for educational development."

The U.K. government's Department for International Development has been providing, since 1989, technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in support of the Educational Reform Programme launched by HRH Crown Prince Hassan in 1988.

U.K.-Jordan cooperation includes projects supporting the Ministry of Education's textbook production capacity; in-service teacher training programmes and a project to strengthen reform of exams and assessment systems.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 13/04/98 18:34									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.8215	0.8995	1.5095	128.40	1.4314	1799.00	2.0524	6.1175
DE Mark	0.5490	-	0.3289	0.8285	71.04	0.7856	987.11	1.1285	3.3571
GB Sterling	1.6880	3.0355	-	2.5178	216.02	2.3876	3000.73	3.4234	10.2040
CH Franc	0.6625	1.20.82	0.3968	-	85.78	0.9476	119.00	135.88	4.0800
JP Yen	0.0077	1.4066	0.4628	1.1656	-	1.1053	13.51	158.49	47.181
CA Dollar	0.6888	1.3049	0.4231	1.0794	1.11	-	1287.82	1.4706	4.3728
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0114	0.3328	0.8838	1392.37	0.7948	-	11.40	3.3926
NL Guilder	0.4872	88.73	0.2919	73.54	63.01	0.8971	876.11	-	2.8756
FR Franc	0.1635	0.2880	0.0981	24.6973	21.16	0.2242	33.58	33.5800	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7504	0.3770	3.6408	0.3085	3.6728	1528.00	3.4160
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2897	0.5317	5.1351	0.4309	5.8703	2165.15	4.8166
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1008	0.097	0.0815	0.98	407.42	0.9108
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.3483	-	9.86	8.8104	9.24	4063.16	8.9588
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1947	1.0301	1.0301	-	0.0833	1.01	418.69	0.9380
Kuwait Dinar	3.2733	2.3208	12.2763	1.2340	1.132	1.1202	5.001.64	0.9280	-
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	0.1028	0.0913	0.0832	-	416.03	0.9288
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4640	2.4545	0.2467	2.3827	0.1999	2.4037	-	2.2348
Egyptian	0.2528	0.2076	1.0882	0.1104	1.0661	0.0885	1.0755	447.44	-

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Oils	Last	review	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Brent	13.27	12.92	SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4888	0.16985	0.40275	34.5292
W. Texas	15.51	15.57	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.49608	0.16323	0.41127	36.2897
Bonny	13.27	12.92	KW Dinar	3.2733	5.86303	1.96233	4.94315	423.908
Dubai	11.92	12.14	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.83325	1.59033	4.00641	343.525
Uhl. Gas	153.00	0.00	CY Pound	1.8893	3.4049	1.1203	2.8217	241.887

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	310.5	311
Silver (oz's)	6.36	6.39
Platinum (oz's)	425	427
AL (3 Months)	1438	1442
CU (3 Months)	1795	1800
Zinc (3 Months)	1143	1146
Lead (3 Months)	583	587
Ni (3 Months)	5370	5390

Libor Fixing				
Period	- 1 -	- 3 -	- 6 -	- 1 -
C'mcy	Month	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.6797	5.7266	5.7556	5.8516
GBP	7.5475	7.5417	7.5313	7.5208
JPY	0.8979	0.7813	0.8021	0.5333
DEM	3.6187	3.7438	3.8688	4.0437
FRF	3.5313	1.6841	1.7813	1.9809
CHF	1.5000	3.6289	3.7245	3.9375
ITL	5.6420	5.2860	4.9900	-

Main Equity Indices							
Bourse	Index -	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls
NewYork	DOW JONES	8944.3	-60.56	-0.56	9004.58	8934.58	8894.86
NewYork	S&P 500	1101.84	-8.83	-0.8	1110.75	1100.7	1110.67
London	FT-SE 100	6105.65	50.3	0.83	6105.5	6038.6	6055.2
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16317.58	-163.54	-0.99	16400.9	16277.1	16481.1
Paris	CAC 40	3894.48	20.61	0.53	3897.72	3842.41	3873.87
Frankfurt	DAX	5377.22	47.76	0.91	5320.49	5286.14	5289.46

Energy			* JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/lbs)	147.83	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1824	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1814	1.1873
Sugar (\$/ton)	255.6	Spot	DE Mark	0.3876	0.3895
Wheat (\$/ton)	0	Spot	CH Franc	0.4673	0.4686
Soya (c/lbs)	28.03	Spot	FR Franc	0.1167	0.1163
Tee (c/kg)	148	Spot	JP Yen	0.5484	0.5511
Burley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3443	0.346
Rice (\$/ton)	490	Spot	IT Lira	0.3923	0.3943

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** J

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTRE AMMAN - SHARJAH										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 13/04/1998										
PAST 12 MONTHS	HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
350,000	251,000	ARAB BANK	14.1	1.16	8	260	89320	347.00	344.00	3.00
2,340	1,660	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	1	150	263	1.75	1.75	
1,340	1,240	BANK OF JORDAN	4.1	0.00	4	1200	1581	1.35	1.30	.05
2,680	1,650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.4	7.75	25	7052	12875	1.80	1.82	.02
5,500	4,660	THE HOUSING BK.	17.0	2.70	5	3600	19307	5.42	5.35	.07
4,160	1,410	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	9	0.00	1	250	453	1.82	1.81	.01
920	520	JOR. GULF BANK	4.0	10.29	12	24850	16698	67	68	.01
4,020	1,840	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.2	0.00	11	1752	3224	1.85	1.80	.05
1,440	1,020	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	9	0.00	1	300	107	1.02	1.07	.05
3,900	1,870	JOR. INT. FIN. BANK	11.6	0.00	1	1000	1800	1.87	1.80	.07
1,400	800	BITTAL-MAL (BETHAT)	11.6	17.44	3	850	731	88	86	.02
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 239.58	CHNG: -0.86	72	41074	146357			
2,400	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.0	11.74	2	300	639	2.14	2.13	.01
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 122.66	CHNG: -0.05	2	300	639			
2,140	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.7	4.50	59	31350	68447	2.11	2.22	.11
4,030	1,320	IRBID ELECTRICITY	14.2	4.35	2	500	1150	2.19	2.30	.11
5,000	2,450	HIMER MINERALS	51.4	0.00	1	1000	4935	4.50	4.70	.20
1,550	960	NATL. PORTFOLIO	43.1	0.00	11	4200	4556	1.11	1.08	.03
1,590	600	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	6	0.00	6	2100	759	38	36	.02
4,500	6,700	ALRA'I	9.3	6.55	2	250	2288	9.30	9.15	.15
4,600	2,800	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.4	1.90	2	550	2310	4.15	4.20	.05
1,830	1,520	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.24	13	2400	3656	1.55	1.52	.03
1,810	800	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	4	1200	799	65	67	.02
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 119.75	CHNG: +0.91	100	43600	88899			
4,450	2,690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	19.5	3.81	17	4218	12040	2.82	2.89	.07
11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.5	8.18	6	904	9826	10.90	10.87	.03
1,190	1,040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	12.6	6.90	13	4850	6917	1.39	1.45	.06
5,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	14.5	3.80	34	8573	45077	5.30	5.27	.03
1,530	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	11.1	7.46	3	750	1005	1.34	1.34	
1,420	770	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	2	19900	15522	0.82	0.78	.04
6,350	4,300	DAR ALDANA DV. INV.	7.0	5.98	4	349	2047	5.96	5.85	.11
1,110	670	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	21.4	0.00	2	1250	875	67	70	.03
810	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	12	11750	4700	40	40	
690	500	JOR. ROCHAMER. INDS.	9	0.00	1	2000	1109	55	55	
2,240	1,380	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	14.5	5.63	1	250	355	1.41	1.42	.01
3,000	920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. NPAC	27.4	0.00	10	2246	2557	1.16	1.14	.02
790	530	JOR. SULPHO. CHEM.	9	0.00	3	1350	770	58	57	.01
1,540	910	UNIV. WOOD. INDS.	14.7	6.52	8	3700	3406	93	92	.01
1,230	690	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	9.1	14.71	16	6100	4148	69	68	.01
1,620	1,150	NATL. CHLORINE	10.3	6.80	6	1083	1590	1.48	1.47	.01
1,080	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	14.4	9.80	31	46850	46984	1.02	1.02	
1,250	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	2	410	484	1.19	1.18	.01
1,220	100	UNION CH. & VEG.	49.1	0.00	20	23550	25190	1.05	1.08	.01
860	600	JORDAN STEEL	9.3	8.41	9	4350	3618	86	83	.01
790	570	MTD. EAST COMPLEX	7.8	15.87	31	63950	39453	63	63	
1,100	720	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	54.9	0.00	2	651	651	1.00	1.00	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 110.59	CHNG: +0.24	234	208736	228345			
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 169.92	CHNG: -0.39	408	293710	464239			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 13/04/1998										
N 1,050	910	EXPORT & FIN. BNC. 752	16.8	0.00	5	1150	764	91	91	-
N 1,220	1,050	ISLAMIC INSURANCE CO	0	0.00	7	12250	14715	1.22	1.20	.02
530	340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	6	33750	13503	40	41	.01
800	680	UNION INV. SOF	9	0.00	29	71300	17996	75	76	.01
620	420	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	8	0.00	33	19100	19105	58	58	
1,000	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	4	0.00	1	1000	1000	1.00	1.00	
640	370	ARAB FOOD & FIB.	9	0.00	4	4700	2162	45	46	.01
240	70	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	41.3	0.00	42	10000	2584	38	38	
750	360	NATL. MULT. INC. MANICO	9	0.00	8	12800	4864	38	38	
680	580	MIDSEAT PHARM. 90	9	0.00	3	500	265	63	63	
1,640	840	UNION TORBATO 752	4	0.00	4	15000	2080	138	138	
730	550	RAZI PHARM.	8	0.00	3	6315	4397	69	69	
460	280	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	1	2000	560	27	28	.01
810	490	INDUS. CERAMIC	11.1	0.00	5	3450	1708	50	50	
N 790	550	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	9	0.00	6	4160	2537	61	61	
940	430	NATL. POULTRY	9	0.00	9	6950	3217	47	46	.01
N 1,100	1,000	NAT. ALUMINIUM. 752	45.5	0.00	1	2500	2583	10	10	.01
N 1,310	1,090	NUTRIDAN	P	0.00	7	8000	8320	1.04	1.04	-
N 1,000	750	KABAL PRINT CO. 752	12.6	9.13	1	500	290	83	83	-
GRAND TOTAL					178	363575	155639			

Maurice fires PSG into final

PARIS (AFP) — A fourth-minute goal from Florian Maurice was enough to book Paris Saint Germain a place in the French Cup final as they ousted last year's finalists Guingamp 1-0 at the Parc des Princes on Sunday.

PSG, who last week secured a place in Europe next season by winning the league cup, will play league leaders Lens in the final on May 2 at the Stade de France.

Two Stephane Ziani goals had secured a 2-0 victory for Lens over Lyon in Saturday's other semi-final. Whereas Lens have yet to win the trophy and last reached the final in 1975, PSG, whose league title ambitions have already died for this year, are looking forward to their sixth final appearance and their fifth triumph. They last lifted the trophy in 1995.

Maurice scored the early clincher following a corner by Franck Gava to end a two-month scoring drought. But Guingamp had several chances to level and Daniel Moreira almost equalised within seconds of the goal, but pulled his effort wide.

Maurice then squandered a chance from just five yards out as he fired high over Guingamp keeper Ronald Thomas.

Lionel Rouxel then came close for Guingamp as the play flowed from end to end before Abdelhaff Tasfaout, set up by Nicolas Laspalles, saw a tremendous effort come back off the bar on 24 minutes with PSG keeper Vincent Fernandez beaten.

Marc Simone similarly struck the woodwork for PSG just after the half hour.



PSG Brazilian captain Rai tries to control the ball in the French Cup semifinals against Guingamp. Last year's finalists Guingamp is struggling to avoid relegation in the championship while PSG is fifth placed in the standings. The leader, Lens, advanced to the final by defeating Lyon 2-0. Rai will return to Sao Paulo at the end of the season (Reuters photo)

Further goals seemed inevitable, and still more so when the referee ruled that PSG playmaker Jimmy Algerino had been muscled down in the box five minutes before the break.

Despite angry Guingamp protests, PSG's Brazilian skipper Rai stepped up to send his spotkick goalwards only for Thomas to make a superb save diving to his left.

Ajax take 27th title

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Ajax won their 27th Dutch title in record time — and without playing — as rivals PSV Eindhoven slumped 3-1 at Sparta Rotterdam on Sunday to ensure the runaway leaders can no longer be caught.

Ajax had gone a massive 18 points clear of PSV, the reigning champions, with a 7-2 home blasting of Heerenveen. And with just four games left on the league programme, the Amsterdam outfit are now home and dry.

In sealing the championship after 29 games, Ajax equalled the record set by Alkmaar, who won the title in similarly rapid fashion in the 1980-81 season.

Under the guidance of Danish coach Morten Olsen, Ajax have swept all before them this season, scoring 93 goals to date and losing just once in the league — to PSV at home last December in a seven-goal thriller.

And only Roda JC Kerkrade and PSV have managed to grab even a draw off the new champions, who next season will be chasing a fifth European Champions Cup triumph. They already belong to a select band of clubs who have won all three major European club competitions.

Ajax can collect a sixth domestic double if they win the Dutch Cup. They play Heerenveen in the semi-final and would then face PSV or Twente Enschede in the final.

As if that were not enough, Ajax can claim a further record of goals scored and conceded over the last four league games. They have to score another 12 for a new record of 105 and have so far conceded just 14, six less than the all-time Dutch mark.



New York Knicks forward Buck Williams dives into the Miami crowd for a loose ball April 12. Williams was unhurt on the play (Reuters photo)

Heat beat Knicks in disputed finish

MIAMI (AP) — Allan Houston's last-second shot was disallowed when the officials ruled it occurred after the buzzer, and the Miami Heat defeated the New York Knicks 82-81 in a disputed finish in U.S. National Basketball Association action Sunday.

The Knicks stormed toward referee Bob Delaney when he indicated the basket didn't count, and coach Jeff Van Gundy ripped off his coat in anger. Television replays indicated Houston released the shot with one-tenth of a second left.

But the Heat won, thanks to three baskets by Tim Hardaway in the final two minutes, and reduced the chances that the two rivals will meet in the first round of the playoffs.

Hardaway finished with 21 points. Alonzo Mourning had 22 points and 13 rebounds. Houston led New York with 21 points.

Hornets 88, Pistons 86: In Charlotte, North Carolina, the host Hornets kept alive its fading hopes for homecourt advantage in the first round of the playoffs as Anthony Mason powered the Hornets past Detroit.

Mason matched his season-high with 29 points and added 14 rebounds and four assists, helping Charlotte snap a four-game losing streak.

The Hornets maintained a one-game lead over Atlanta in the battle for the fourth seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Grant Hill had 17 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists for Detroit, giving him six double-doubles and two triple-doubles in 12 games.

SuperSonics 103, Rockets 95: In Seattle, Hersey Hawkins scored 20

points, Detlef Schrempf had 16 points and a season-high 15 rebounds and Seattle defeated Houston in a possible first-round playoff preview.

Hawkins scored 16 points in the third period when the Sonics (59-20) took the lead for good. Seattle trails Utah (59-19) by one game in the loss column in the battle for best record in the West, with the winner likely to meet the Rockets in the first round.

Kevin Willis led Houston with 28 points and Clyde Drexler added 25.

Gary Payton had 19 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds for the Sonics, who won the season series 3-1.

Hawks 91, Wizards 81: In Washington, Eldridge Recasner came off the bench to score 10 of his 17 points in the final period, and Steve Smith had 18 as the Hawks rallied from a 14-point deficit to defeat the Wizards.

The Hawks, who have won five of seven, held the Wizards to two points over the final 6:33.

Washington is 0-3 since a sexual assault complaint was filed against Chris Webber and Juwan Howard, with two of those games coming after Rod Strickland suffered a season-ending leg injury.

Nets 116, Raptors 109: In Toronto, Keith Van Horn scored a season-high 33 points, Kerry Kittles added 31 and New Jersey played a perfect final three minutes to move into seventh place in the Eastern Conference.

The Nets (42-36), winners of five straight and seven of their last nine, moved one-half game ahead of the New York Knicks.

The Nets went 5-for-5

from the field and 8-for-8 from the line over the final three minutes. Sam Cassell added 25 points for New Jersey.

Dee Brown finished with 30 for Toronto, including 18 on 3-pointers.

Pacers 93, Celtics 87: In Boston, Antonio Davis scored a season-high 28 points and Indiana ran its winning streak to four games.

Pacers coach Larry Bird, who led the Celtics to three NBA championships in the 1980s as a player, got a mild ovation before the game — nothing compared with the rousing welcome he received Jan. 18 in his first game in Boston as Indiana's coach.

Indiana (55-23) maintained its half-game lead over Miami (55-24). The team with the better record would have homecourt advantage if they meet in the second round of the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Suns 129, Grizzlies 106: In Vancouver, British Columbia, George McCloud scored a season-high 25 points as Phoenix won its eighth straight and moved into a tie for fourth place in the West.

Antonio McDyeess chipped in with 23 points and seven rebounds as six Suns players reached double figures in scoring.

McCloud, who make a season-high 11 field goals and pulled down eight rebounds, made his second straight start since taking over for Danny Manning, who suffered a season-ending knee injury Tuesday at Sacramento.

The Suns heated up early, hitting 14 of their first 15 shots.

Re-born Rangers overhaul Celtic at top

GLASGOW (AFP) — Rangers kept alive their hopes of a record 10th successive league title after beating arch rivals Celtic 2-0 at Ibrox in the decisive encounter of the run-in to the season on Sunday.

The victory, secured by breathtaking goals from Swedish veteran Jonas Thern and German ace Jorg Albertz, puts Rangers back on top of the Scottish Premier Division at the expense of Celtic with just four matches to play.

The result sets up a thrilling climax to one of the most intriguing seasons in Scottish football for years as both teams are level on points with Rangers enjoying a superior goal difference of just one.

Rangers' triumph continues a remarkable revival by Walter Smith's side and keeps them on course for Cup/League double that looked highly unlikely only a few weeks ago.

It was also a sweet moment for Smith himself in his final Old Firm encounter before he hands over the manager's job to former Holland coach Advocaat at the end of the season.

The match was a 50,000 capacity crowd sell-out and Ibrox was a sea of green and white and Irish flags at the Celtic end with the rest of the stadium draped in Union Jacks and the red, blue and white of Rangers.

Celtic looked the better side for the opening 20 minutes, though neither side created a genuine chance on goal in that period.

But with 24 minutes on the clock Swedish international Thern gave Rangers the lead with a goal of rare quality.

Amoruso crossed the ball into the box from the left. Stubbs headed clear but only as far as Thern who steadied himself 25-yards out before lashing a volley that dipped under the cross bar.

Jorg Albertz, who scored a stunning goal of his own in Rangers' Scottish Cup semi-final win over Celtic last Sunday, came close to extending the lead with an angled header which had Celtic keeper Jonathan Gould at full stretch.

Rangers were in the ascendant but Celtic had a good chance to level the match on the stroke of half-time when Marc Rieper headed straight at goalkeeper Andy Gormam from six yards.

But 20 minutes after the interval Rangers wrapped up victory with a brilliant solo effort by Albertz, who produced a repeat of his stunning effort last weekend.

The German midfielder picked up possession midway into the Celtic half and there seemed to be no obvious danger as he set off on a mazy run towards the area.

But after evading a string of challenges by the Celtic defenders, Albertz worked his way into the left of the area and fired a low drive across goal into the far corner of the net.



Montreal Expos starting pitcher Dustin Hermanson slides into the tag of Chicago Cubs catcher Scott Servais at home plate during the third inning of action at Olympic stadium in Montreal. Hermanson was running in on the single hit by Expos Vladimir Guerrero (Reuters photo)

SCOREBOARD

NBA Charlotte 88 Detroit 86 Miami 82 New York 81 Seattle 103 Houston 95 Atlanta 91 Washington 81 New Jersey 116 Toronto 109 Indiana 93 Boston 87 Phoenix 129 Vancouver 106				Cincinnati 10 Colorado 4 San Diego 4 Arizona 2 San Francisco 2 St Louis 1 Los Angeles 7 Houston 6 (10)				Karabukspor 0 Gaziantepspor 1 Bursaspor 0 Sekerspor 6 Kayserispor 5 Trabzonspor 6 Antalyaspor 2 Vanspor 0 Galatasaray 6 Altay 1			
NHL New Jersey 5 Florida 5 (OT) Phoenix 2 Chicago 1 Dallas 4 St Louis 3				French Cup P. S. Germain 1 Guingamp 0 PSG play Lens in May 2 final at Stade de France				Greek Championship Olympiakos 4 Pyrgos 2 Apollon 4 PAOK 4 Heraklis 1 Ionikos 1 Veria 3 OFI 0 Panathinaikos 2 Xanthi 1 Proodeftiki 1 Panionios 1 Athinaios 0 Kalamata 0			
American League Boston 8 Seattle 7 Anaheim 12 Cleveland 1 Baltimore 6 Detroit 3 N.Y. Yankees 7 Oakland 5 Tampa Bay 4 Chi White Sox 1 Minnesota 7 Kansas City 2 Texas 3 Toronto 1				Spanish League SD Compostela 1 Real Sociedad 3 Salamanca 6 Valencia 0 Zaragoza 2 Mallorca 3 Oviedo 0 R. Santander 1 Athletic Bilbao 2 Valladolid 0 E. Barcelona 2 Tenerife 0				Scottish Premier Division Rangers 2 Celtic 0			
National League Montreal 4 Chicago Cubs 1 Atlanta 3 Philadelphia 2 Pittsburgh 7 Florida 3 Ny Mets 6 Milwaukee 4				German championship B. Moncheng. 0 Duisburg 3				Estoril Open Alberto Berasategui (Spa x3) bt Thomas Muster (Aut) 6-3, 6-1, 6-3			

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	Yusra & Ilham Shahin ... in	Morgan Freeman & Ashley Judd ... in	The biggest cinema production	ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI - KAMANANA	ABDOUN	ABDOUN	TEL: 4625155
	DANTELLA (ARABIC)	KISS THE GIRLS	TITANIC	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	GRAND OPENING TITANIC	GRAND OPENING TITANIC	STARTING APRIL 6TH
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00	Shows: 11:00, 2:00, 5:15, 8:30, 12:00	Shows: 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 The film is also on at 12:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	Don't Laugh Please We're Jordanian Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155

ed time
the charm
for Pierce
Florida

WELLS ISLAND (AFP) — Mary Pierce rallied from a two-set deficit to beat Conchita Martinez 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 Sunday in the final of the \$250,000 Wells Fargo event here. It was her first title since 1995.

Pierce, who was ranked 10th in the world, won the match in straight sets. She had a 10th place ranking in the world. She had a 10th place ranking in the world. She had a 10th place ranking in the world.

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3rd time the charm for Pierce in Florida

AMELIA ISLAND (AFP) — Mary Pierce rallied from an error-strewn first set to defeat Conchita Martinez 6-7 (8/10), 6-0, 6-2 Sunday in the final of the \$450,000 WTA Tour event here. It was third time lucky for the fourth-seeded Frenchwoman, who was runner-up at Amelia Island for the past two years.

Even with numerous unforced errors, Pierce was able to take the sixth-seeded Martinez to a tiebreaker in the opening set. They traded breaks in the first three games as Martinez took a 2-1 lead.

The Spaniard stayed on top until the 10th game when, serving for the set, she dropped her serve with a forehand long on break point. Both had chances to take the set in the tiebreaker.

Martinez had the first opportunity, at 6-5. Pierce had the next chance but missed a forehand. Martinez failed on her second set point, at 8-7, but Pierce gave her a third chance when she netted an overhead.

Then the Frenchwoman netted a service return to close the set after nearly an hour. Then Pierce took charge. She won the next eight games to take the second set 6-0 and take a 2-0 lead in the third.

She broke Martinez again in the seventh game of the



Mary Pierce

third to lead 5-2, and efficiently served out the match.

Pierce, who lost to Irina Spirlea in three sets in the 1996 final here and to

Lindsay Davenport in straight sets last year, captured her second title of the year.

Pierce won the Open Gaz de France in Paris in

February and was a quarter-finalist at the Australian Open.

Martinez won here in 1995, the last time Pierce was not a finalist.

Schumacher wins in Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Michael Schumacher's Ferrari won the Argentine Grand Prix here on Sunday to grab second spot in the Formula One world championship in this third race of the year.

And his victory over 72 laps on this 4.259km (2.646 mile) Oscar-Galvez circuit, stopped the supremacy of McLaren over the first two races.

Finland's Mika Hakkinen, the world championship leader who won in Melbourne and Sao Paulo, was second but saw his championship lead extended to 12 points. Ulsterman Eddie Irvine made it double joy for Ferrari with third place. Benetton's Alexander Wurz of Austria was fourth with Jean Alesi fifth in his Sauber.

Meanwhile Scot David Coulthard, second in his McLaren in the first two races, could only make sixth spot. Schumacher, using wider Goodyear tyres which gave him a clear advantage, survived a late scare as he left the circuit and bounced over the gravel with just seven laps to go.

However the two-time world champion kept his cool for his 28th Grand Prix victory.

It was Hakkinen who had the best start. He overtook the Ferrari of Schumacher on the front row by the first corner to tuck into second place behind teammate Coulthard. Coulthard was starting in pole position for the first time in 38 races. However the supremacy of the McLarens was short-lived.

Schumacher hit back by the second lap to regain second by getting past Hakkinen, who had led the world championship by eight points after winning the first two races.

And three laps later he sneaked past Coulthard on the inside to take the lead. Coulthard was left spinning on the track and dropped to sixth.

Schumacher said afterwards on the incident: "Coulthard went a bit wide, but when I went for it he closed the door and left no room to go."

"But I did not want to lift off the pedal because I had the chance. The car was damaged after that which made it not nice to drive, but it was good enough."

"I knew I had to come out ahead after the second stop and the gap we had was enough as long as there were no problems in the



McLaren-Mercedes drivers Scotland's David Coulthard (L) and teammate Finland's Mika Hakkinen lead the pack at the start of the Argentine Grand Prix (Reuters photo)



German Formula One driver Michael Schumacher (R) and teammate Ireland's Eddie Irvine lift Ferrari's team manager Jean Todt (C) as they celebrate their victory in the Argentine Grand Prix, April 12. Finnish driver Mika Hakkinen from McLaren came in second and Irvine finished third (Reuters photo)

pit. But we got it right." Jordan's early-season woes when he completed an unwanted South American double as he went the same way he did in Brazil a fortnight ago by spinning out.

Two-time world champion Schumacher made his first pit stop on lap 28 allowing Hakkinen to take over the lead. Hakkinen, who had obviously been carrying a heavy fuel load at the start, steadily built-up his lead over Schumacher to around 14 seconds at the half-way point of the race.

But as the Bridgestone tyres began to wear, making it difficult to control the car, the Finn finally stopped on

lap 42 allowing Schumacher to regain first place. Schumacher was going two seconds a laps faster than Hakkinen and in the eight laps till the 50th circuit, he effectively won the race.

He forged 19 seconds ahead, leaving enough room for a pitstop, though he could see Hakkinen in his mirror as he shot back onto the track. Then came the late scare, but Schumacher was not to be denied. The Benetton of Austria's Alexander Wurz was third with six laps remaining but he made a bad mistake and dropped down the placing.

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Scots boss set to try out World Cup hopefuls

GLASGOW (AFP) — Scotland manager Craig Brown indicated Monday that he may take the opportunity to experiment in the World Cup warm-up game against Finland next week.

Brown, who names his squad on Tuesday for the match at Hibernian's Easter Road ground, promised last month before the B team match with Wales that if any player made an impact that night he would be promoted.

Celtic pair, keeper Jonathan Gould and defender Tosh McKinlay, were impressive as was

feel he deserves a place in the senior squad.

Ritchie may have to bide his time as Scotland have strength in depth at the heart of their defence.

Colin Hendry, Colin Calderwood, Matt Elliott, Christian Dailly and David Weir are all ahead of the Hearts youngster in the pecking order.

The Finland game will be Scotland's last World Cup warm-up match on home soil before France.

Following the game in Edinburgh they have matches in New York and Washington next month

against Colombia and the United States.

Brown is unlikely to tamper with his regular squad too much, although he will be praying some of his key players stay injury free.

He was without the likes of John Collins, Kevin Gallacher, Paul Lambert, Craig Burley and Gordon Durie for the match against Denmark last month.

The result was that Scotland went down 1-0 with Rangers star Brian Laudrup getting the winner.

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Marcelo Rios

Sampras closely trails Rios in latest ATP rankings

PARIS (AFP) — Leading ATP men's tennis rankings issued Monday:

1. Marcelo Rios (Chi)	3645
2. Pete Sampras (USA)	3600
3. Petr Korda (Cze)	3443
4. Patrick Rafter (Aus)	3254
5. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	3094
6. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)	3027
7. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)	2663
8. Alex Corretja (Spa)	2523
9. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	2308
10. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra)	2262
11. Karol Kucera (Svk)	2141
12. Rikis Mantilla (Spa)	2048
13. Michael Chang (USA)	2009
14. Cedric Pioline (Fra)	1860
15. Tim Henman (Gbr)	1847
16. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)	1820
17. Mark Philippoussis (Aus)	1767
18. Carlos Moyes (Spa)	1744
19. Sergi Bruguera (Spa)	1610
20. Albert Costa (Spa)	1575
21. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)	1574
22. Andre Agassi (USA)	1558
23. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	1473
24. Magnus Norman (Swe)	1472
25. Nicolas Pietrangeli (Ger)	1449
26. Fabrice Santoro (Fra)	1436
27. Thomas Muster (Aut)	1407
28. Andrei Medvedev (Ukr)	1325
29. Marc Rosset (Swi)	1297
30. Jan Siemerink (Ned)	1261

Dutch act to sort out World Cup rows

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Fears of a row between players and the Dutch Royal Football Association (KNVB) over World Cup bonuses appear to be over, the players' agent Wil Langenberg said Monday.

"I'm sure the KNVB will accept our conditions," he

said. The players and coach Guus Hiddink had threatened to go to court over bonuses which the KNVB had refused to pay.

Hiddink said another conflict appeared to have been resolved after a talk with Edgar Davids who has been

out-of-favour since being sent home from the European Championships in 1996 when the Juventus midfielder refused to be a substitute.

"If he maintains his present form I'm sure he'll be in the World Cup squad," said Hiddink.

Ronaldomania reaches Moscow

MOSCOW (AFP) — More than 100 fans and 50 journalists gathered at Moscow's Sheremetyevo international airport on Monday for the arrival of the world's top player Ronaldo.

But they nearly missed him because his Inter Milan side's aircraft was forced to circle for 90 minutes because of an unexpected snowfall in the Russian capital, and the plane was almost diverted to another airport.

Ronaldo's second visit to the Russian capital — he first visited in September 1996 when Brazil drew 2-2 with Russia in a friendly — has sparked enormous interest among Russian fans for Tuesday's UEFA Cup semi-final.

Ronaldo was flanked by two police officers during the 50-metre walk from customs to the team bus, but they were unable to stop Spartak Moscow fans surging forward to get an autograph or photo.

The return leg of the UEFA Cup semi-final has generated huge interest with fans queuing at ticket offices overnight Saturday to buy tickets which were sold out by Sunday.

If Spartak overturn Inter's 2-1 advantage from the first leg, coach Oleg Romantsev — who has reached the semi-finals of all three major European cups — would become the first Russian coach to guide his team to the UEFA Cup final.

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THAI NEW YEAR HEAD BUTTING: Two men launch forward at each other in Bangkok while taking part in a traditional head butting match on Monday during celebrations for Songkran, the Thai New Year. The traditional Thai New Year is celebrated nationwide with a variety of religious ceremonies, street entertainment and traditional water fights, cooling off during the warmest time of year (AFP photo)

U.S. diplomat says U.N.-Iraq accord seems to be working

MANAMA (AFP) — U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, said Sunday the Iraq-U.N. accord on arms inspections appeared to be working but would not say if Washington would reduce its military presence in the Gulf.

"The agreement seems to be working. What we are seeking is compliance with the agreement. We want unfettered and unrestricted access to presidential and other sensitive sites in Iraq for U.N. weapons inspectors," Mr. Richardson told reporters in the Bahraini capital at the end of a two-day visit.

Iraq and the United Nations signed an accord in February

allowing U.N. experts to inspect eight presidential sites but the United States continues to deploy a large military force in the Gulf.

Asked when that presence would be reduced, Mr. Richardson said: "We have to wait and watch."

Britain is preparing to withdraw its aircraft carrier from the Gulf in the next few days. On Iran, U.S. President Bill Clinton's national security advisor on Gulf affairs expressed hope that the new regime of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami would usher in positive changes.

"We are closely monitoring Iran's military capabilities and weapons of mass destruction."

We, however, believe that the changes in Iran will be positive under President Khatami," said Bruce Reidel. Mr. Richardson left Bahrain on Sunday night for Bangladesh on the start of an Asian tour.

Earlier, he held talks with Bahraini Emir Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa and passed on an invitation from Mr. Clinton for the Emir to visit the United States in June.

After Bangladesh, Mr. Richardson is due to visit India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand during his 10-day Asian tour largely aimed at laying the groundwork for a visit by Mr. Clinton later this year.

Algeria:

No Islamic rule on ending rape pregnancy

PARIS (R) — Algeria's highest religious authority has issued no Islamic edict allowing women raped by "terrorists" to end their pregnancy, Algerian newspapers said on Monday.

"There is no fatwa (edict) regarding women raped by terrorists," said Le Matin and La Tribune newspapers, quoting the supreme Islamic Council, the religious body advising the government on Islamic matters.

The council said it was bound by the law which specifies that the body issues rules only when asked to do so by the president.

"Until now there is no submission of the case by the president," the newspapers quoted the council as adding.

On Sunday, the Algerian daily Al Khabar said the council had issued a fatwa stating that "the interruption of the pregnancy is now authorised, except for extreme cases, for women who are victims of rapes committed by terrorists."

Hundreds of women, and girls as young as 12, have been raped during attacks on Algerian villages in which thousands of people have been killed. Others have been kidnapped by rebels and raped, and discovered after escaping that they were pregnant.

Islamists, called "terrorists" in official Algerian parlance, have been battling the government since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election

in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

A U.S. State Department 1997 report on human rights in Algeria said "there were frequent reports of young women being abducted and repeatedly raped, often for weeks at a time. The terrorists sought to justify this sexual abuse by referring to it as 'temporary marriage,' but all other observers, including Islamic scholars, uniformly condemned the practice as rape."

A 16-year-old girl, who escaped after being held captive by rebels for months, told an Algerian state-run television programme at the weekend that she had been raped by 30 of her captors in one night.

In a recent television interview in Buenos Aires, Sakic acknowledged that he was a commander at the camp, but said "nothing happened in Jasenovac." He has since disappeared from his home in Argentina. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Amir Gissin said Israel so far has made no request to bring Sakic to Israel to stand trial.

An official at the ministry, speaking on condition of anonymity, added that Israel prefers Nazi war criminals to be brought to trial in the country where they committed the crimes. Croatian Justice Minister Miroslav Separevic said he has started legal and diplomatic procedures to have Sakic returned for trial.

Israel not expected to ask for Sakic extradition

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel is unlikely to seek the extradition of the commander of a World War II concentration camp from Argentina, preferring that he be tried in Croatia, officials said Monday.

Argentine President Carlos Menem last week ordered police to detain Dinko Sakic and has indicated he would not oppose his extradition.

Sakic, 76, was the highest commander at Jasenovac, a concentration camp where tens of thousands of Serbs, Gypsies, and Jews were killed under Croatian dictator Ante Pavelic, a wartime ally of Nazi Germany.

In a recent television interview in Buenos Aires, Sakic acknowledged that he was a commander at the camp, but said "nothing happened in Jasenovac." He has since disappeared from his home in Argentina. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Amir Gissin said Israel so far has made no request to bring Sakic to Israel to stand trial.

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Semdin Sakic last month surrendered to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), a leading Iraqi Kurdish group cooperating with Turkey, after a dispute with PKK leader

Abdullah Ocalan. The Turkish general staff said in a statement that a marine team captured Mr. Sakic early Monday in Dohuk, a KDP-controlled town some 60 km south of the Turkish border, and brought him to Turkish territory by helicopter.

"The operation was conducted after the KDP rejected our request for Sakic's extradition," the statement said. KDP officials in Ankara

Iran favours military games with regional countries

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran said Monday it favoured staging joint military manoeuvres with other countries in the region in the Gulf and Oman Sea, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

"We understand certain countries are ready to take part in joint naval manoeuvres," said Colonel Abdullah Manavi-Rudrani, a spokesman for ongoing Iranian exercises in the Gulf.

"The Iranian manoeuvres show that we are taking measures to ensure the region's security with the help of other countries in the area," he added without naming the countries

Iran favoured holding exercises with.

Iran's navy launched manoeuvres in the Gulf and Sea of Oman on Sunday.

The manoeuvres, baptised "Enehad" (Unity), were designed to "increase the combat readiness of Iran's naval forces in safeguarding the country's sea borders and testing military equipment."

Three Russian-built submarines are taking part in the manoeuvres along with two destroyers and two light vessels. Other warships are also taking part along with helicopters, reconnaissance aircraft and three F-4 jet fighters.

The operations, involving 15,000 men, include night refuelling at sea, controlling and guiding aircraft, air defence and electronic warfare.

Iran's navy chief Admiral Abbas Mohtaj said earlier that his forces were willing to carry out joint exercises with Muslim states in the Gulf, saying the name Enehad showed that the manoeuvres were "aimed towards unity of the regional countries."

Iran has sought to encourage Gulf Arab states to end the presence of U.S. and allied forces in the region and opt for regional cooperation to ensure security.

Iran law sets tough rules on press photos of women

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's parliament has passed the general outlines of a controversial law that aims to toughen the country's rules on the publication of photographs of women.

The official news agency IRNA said in a report on Sunday night that the law seeks to ban "the use of women as a tool by publications in the form of photos or in content."

It did not elaborate on the law, which needs to go through another parliament vote. It must also be approved by the Guardian Council,

which has the final say on parliamentary legislation.

The legislation has come under fire from opponents, including Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Ataollah Mohajerani, who see it as ambiguous, creating the potential for many interpretations that could restrict press freedom.

A group of conservative parliament members had demanded more rigid rules after publications used photographs of women, most of them in full Islamic dress, in an apparent effort to boost circulation.

They further pressed the issue when a court last month penalised a magazine head on charges of running "obscene pictures" of U.S. President Bill Clinton's alleged lovers.

Iran enforces a strict Islamic dress code requiring women to wear a loose garment covering their body and hair, allowing only their face and hands to be seen. Of the few photographs of foreign women that Iranian magazines print, many show them wearing hats and long dresses.

Release of all POWs expected within 12 months — Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — The exchange of POWs held since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, the main outstanding bar to diplomatic ties between Tehran and Baghdad, should be completed within the next 12 months, a senior Iranian official said Monday.

"This problem will be settled during the Iranian year 1377 [which ends in March 1999]," General Abdullah Najafi, head of Iran's POW committee said.

"In the next few days the two sides will meet at the border for preliminary talks which will be

completed in Baghdad," he told the official Iranian news agency IRNA.

The Baghdad meeting would be held on April 18, Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf said Sunday.

Iran released 5,584 Iraqi POWs and Iraq released three Iranian POWs and 316 other Iranian "detainees" in an exchange supervised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) between April 2 and 7.

The majority of those released had been held for

more than 15 years, the ICRC said.

Most registered POWs had now been freed, Mr. Najafi said. He said the two governments were expected to start negotiations soon on the question of unregistered detainees.

The POW question is the main outstanding bar to the reopening of diplomatic ties broken since the Iran-Iraq war. Tehran also demands that Baghdad cease allowing the People's Mujahadeen, the main armed Iranian opposition group, to use bases in Iraq.

Turkey captures former PKK commander

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish marines brought a former top commander of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) to Turkey Monday after capturing him in neighbouring northern Iraq, the military announced.

Semdin Sakic last month surrendered to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), a leading Iraqi Kurdish group cooperating with Turkey, after a dispute with PKK leader

Abdullah Ocalan.

The Turkish general staff said in a statement that a marine team captured Mr. Sakic early Monday in Dohuk, a KDP-controlled town some 60 km south of the Turkish border, and brought him to Turkish territory by helicopter.

"The operation was conducted after the KDP rejected our request for Sakic's extradition," the statement said. KDP officials in Ankara

were not immediately available for comment, and it was not clear if the operation would damage relations between Ankara and the Iraqi Kurd group.

Mr. Sakic used to be the commander of PKK rebels in "northern Kurdistan," referring to southeastern Turkey in the group's terminology.

But he quit the PKK and surrendered to the KDP on March 16.

Western tourists make gradual return to Iraq's ancient sites

BABYLON (AFP) — A group of Austrian tourists wanders around the site of ancient Babylon, just 100 km south of Baghdad, admiring what remains of one of the wonders of the ancient world.

The Hanging Gardens are no more but the Austrians are able to see the throne room of Nebuchadnezzar and the processional route used by the Babylonian kings for their great religious feasts.

A plaque records that "victorious" Iraqi President Saddam Hussein carried out a partial reconstruction of the site in the early 1980s, before Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the 1991 Gulf war devastated Iraq's tourism industry.

The group's leader, Hannes Galter, an orientalist from the University of Graz, is returning to Iraq for the first time since 1989.

He is bringing with him 23 of his companions for a tour of the remains of the ancient civilisations of the Middle East.

"When the crisis broke out [between Iraq and the United Nations over disarmament last November], we had plenty of cancella-

tions," he says.

"But after February [when the crisis was resolved] we actually took two additional bookings."

Mr. Galter's party is one of a growing number of specialist tour groups coming to Iraq to take advantage of a cut-price opportunity to visit some of the ancient world's most famous sites.

A 12-day tour taking in such evocative names as Babylon and Nineveh, Baghdad and Ur of the Chaldees costs just \$1,000 all in, including the 12-hour coach journey from Amman to the Iraqi capital.

Mr. Galter says his group used the services of Austrian tour firm Sindbad Reisen, who run a joint venture with one of the more successful Iraqi private tour operators, Atlas Travel and Tourism.

"The Iraqis are very welcoming and we experienced no difficulties at the border, but the terrible damage to the tourism infrastructure is clear for all to see and, with the best will in the world, you can't make up for that," he says.

In his air-conditioned office in Saadoun Street, Baghdad's oldest business

district, Atlas director Safaa Al Jassani insists that business is not going too badly in the circumstances.

Already this year his firm has handled a total of 125 tourists in five groups from Austria, Italy and Switzerland and he says his firm has further bookings from Belgium and France for October. Last year his company welcomed 300 Western tourists, six of them Americans with a Canadian tour group.

The motives of Mr. Jassani's Austrian partner in the joint venture are more sentimental than commercial.

The child of an Iraqi father and an Austrian mother, Luay Sarsam says he wants to counter-act the prejudices about Iraq that have developed in the West since the invasion of Kuwait and the imposition of U.N. sanctions.

"The sanctions have demonised a whole people — that's why I want people to rediscover the glories of Iraq and to remind them that Iraq was the cradle of civilisation," he says.

He says most of his niche clientele are students and pensioners attracted by the

low prices Iraq has to offer following the collapse of the exchange rate of its currency, the dinar, in the wake of U.N. sanctions.

A meal in the most expensive restaurant in Baghdad

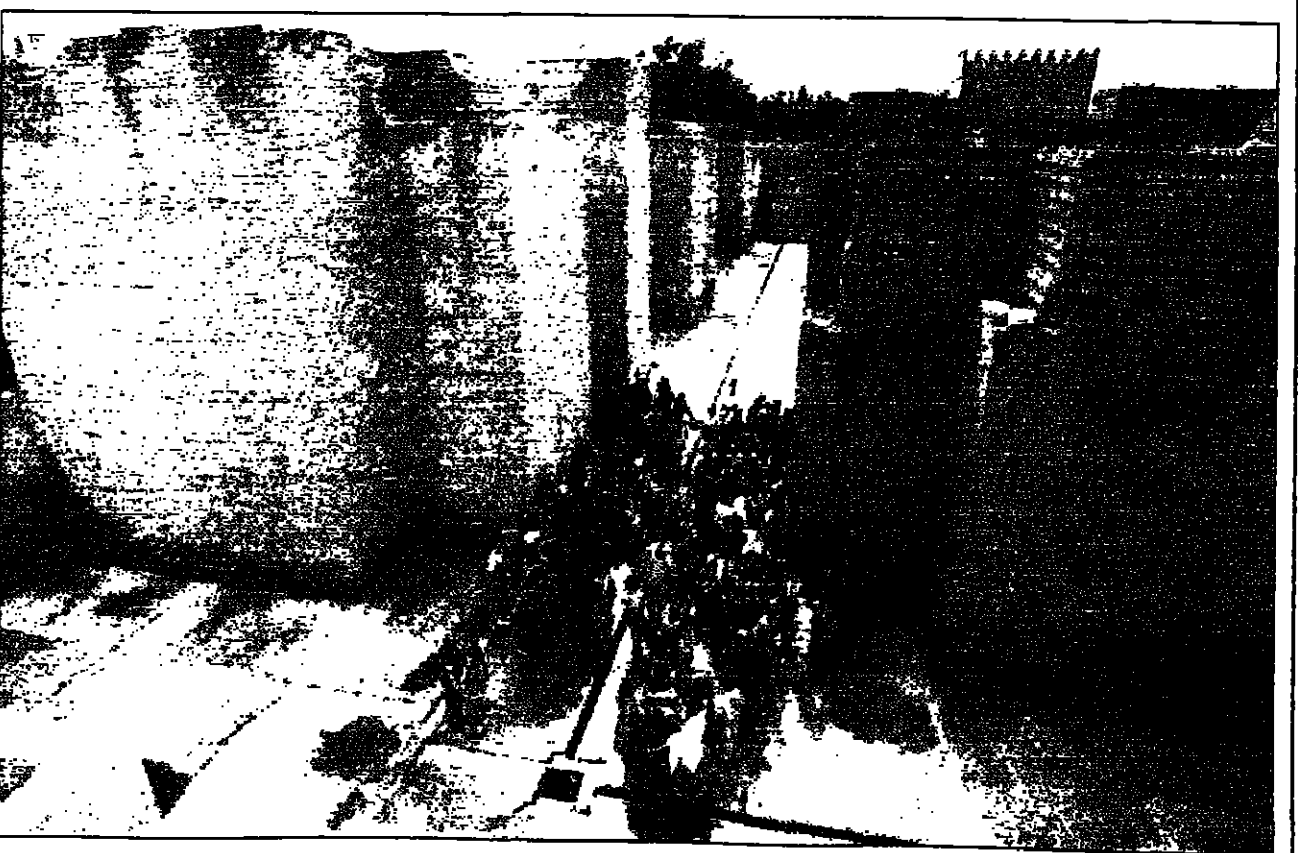
costs around 13,000 dinars, as much as three months' salary for an Iraqi civil servant but barely \$10 at the current exchange rate.

Westerners are obliged to pay their hotel bills in dol-

lars at the old official exchange rate, but a night at the capital's most luxurious hotel, the Al Rasheed, still only costs around \$50 a night.

For Mr. Sarsam the com-

mercial return on his investment will come in the future. It is important get in now, because once sanctions are lifted the tourism sector will "explode," he says.



Schoolchildren visit the site of Babylon, one of the wonders of the ancient world on Saturday (AFP photo)

Major is worth more to advertisers than Campbell or Moss

LONDON (AFP) — Former British Prime Minister John Major is worth more to advertisers than supermodels Naomi Campbell or Kate Moss.

According to the Daily Telegraph here, he can command up to \$165,000 for an advertising endorsement, higher than the two British models.

The paper said Major had been offered this sum by the advertising agency Saatchi to endorse The Independent newspaper in a 30-second television spot.

He eventually turned the offer down. Major has become a millionaire since leaving Downing Street last May after his Conservative Party's humiliating election defeat, the paper said.

Rhys-Jones astonishes Fergie

LONDON (AFP) — Sophie Rhys-Jones, the girlfriend of Prince Edward, "astonished" the Duchess of York when she asked her to take part in a publicity stunt showing her being sprayed with water in an empty swimming pool.

The Daily Telegraph reported. The duchess, who is the former wife of Prince Edward's brother, Prince Andrew, was said to be "amused, if a little hurt," according to one of her friends. There is no prospect of the duchess accepting the invitation from Rhys-Jones who has been hired to do public relations work for a London health club, the newspaper added.

The duchess, who is the former wife of Prince Edward's brother, Prince Andrew, was said to be "amused, if a little hurt," according to one of her friends. There is no prospect of the duchess accepting the invitation from Rhys-Jones who has been hired to do public relations work for a London health club, the newspaper added.

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Bahrain starts naval exercises with U.S., U.K.

MANAMA (AP) — Bahrain's navy began naval exercises with the U.S. and U.K. on Monday.

The eight-day exercises will involve the U.S. Navy's USS Zumwalt and the U.K.'s HMS Dryad.

The exercises are part of a larger program of cooperation between the Bahraini and British navies.

The exercises will take place in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

The exercises are expected to conclude on Monday.

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